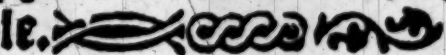


Ckycharde Rolle hermyte of Hampull in
his contemplacyons of the drede and loue of
god With other dyuerse tytles as it sheweth
in his table. .






Copus Richardi Rolle heremite de Hampull
qui obiit Anno christi. M. CCC. xlix. ✠

This shorte epystle that foloweth is dryyded
in sondry maters / & eche mater by hymselfe
in sondry tytles as this kalender sheweth. And that
thou mayst sone fynde what mater þy pleaseþ / these
tytles ben here in the Epystle marked with dyuerse
lettres in maner of a table. 

A How eche man sholde desyre to loue god.

B How men somtyme loued god / & how holy men
somtyme were bysytred with swetnesse in the loue
of almyghty god. 

Q What is drede & how a man sholde drede god.


D What is charyte and how & why þu shalt loue thy

O Of foure degrees of loue / & in þy fyrst ben (god.
fyue poynte. **O**rdeyned loue.

E The fyrst is that thou shalt loue thy flesche one
ly that it be susteyned. 

H The.ii. is þu shalt loue þy worlde to no supfluyte.


O The.iii. is þu shalt loue thy neghbour for god.

N The fourth is thou shalt loue thy frende for his
good lyuyng. 

I The fyfth is thou shalt loue thy enemye for þy
more drede. 

In the seconde degre of loue ben thre poyntes.

Clene loue.

R The fyrste poynt is thou shalt loue no vyce nor
vertue. 

H The seconde is þu shalt hate all euyl customes.

N The thyrde is thou shalt not sette lyght by syn

Richard Rolle.

A.ii.

ne be it neuer so lytell.

In the thyrde degre of loue be fyue poyntes.

Stedfast loue.

N The fyrst is thou shalte loue god with all thy desyre.

O The seconde is thou shalte in the begynnynge of thy werkes thynke on þy worschyp & drede of god.

D The thyrde is thou shalte do no synne vpon trust of ther good dedes.

R The fourthe is thou shalte rule the dyscretly that thou fayle not for none feruent wyll.

F The fyfth is thou shalt not leue thy good luyngge for feynthe herte ne for temptacyon.

In the fourth degre of loue ben. viii. poyntes.

Parfyte loue.

S How by encrease of vertues thou mayst come to perfeccyon.

How good wyll is & may be in dyuerse meners.

What parfyte is in prayer and in what maner þy shalte praye.

How thou mayst beware and knowe of temptacyons wakyngge or sleppynge / and how thou shalte with stande theym.

How thou shalt be pacient & what tyme pacyence is moost nedefull.

How perseueraunce is nedefull & how þy mayst be perseueraunt.

By what prayer or thought thou mayst be styred to deuocyon.

Explicit tabula.

In the begynnynge and endynge of all good
werkes worshyp & thankynge be to almygh
ty god maker & byer of all mākynde begyn
ner and ender of all goodnes / without whos
se gyfte & helpe no maner vertue is ne maye
be whether it be in thought wyll / or dede / than what
euer we synfull creatures thynke or do speke or wyte
that may tourne in to proufyte of mannes soule to
god onely be the worshyp that sente all grace to vs
no praylynge for of vs without hym cometh no thyn
ge but fylthe & synne. Now than good god of his en
deles myght & plenteuous goodnes graunte me gras
te to thynke somwat of his dere loue & how he sholde
be loued of that same loue some wordes to wyte whi
che may to hym be worshyp to the wyter meke and
proufytable to the reder. Amen.

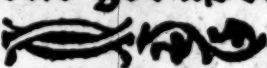
How eche man sholde desyre to loue god

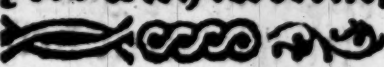
Amonge all creatures that euer god of his en
deles myght made was there none þ he so lo
ued as he dyd mankynde whom he made euerlastyn
ge blysse in stede of aūgels whiche dyd fal from blysse
downe in to helle. But that good god loued so man
that for as moche as man had forseyted that blysse
thorugh synne of Adam he of his plenteuous chary
te became man to bye body and soule that was lost.

In what maner he bought vs euery crysten mā kno
weth or sholde knowe that no lasse pryce / but suffred
his owne precyous body to be al to rente with bytter
paynes of scorpyng. He suffred also a garlode of shar
pethornes pressyd to his heed whiche percyd so the

Richard Rol.

A.iii.

veynes that the blood ran doune in to his eyen / nose
mouth & eeres. Afterwarde wpon þ crosse his bones
were drawe out of Joynte the veynes & the senewes
were bozsten for strayte drawynge to a crosse he was
nayed hande & foot / and so fayled the blood of kynde
with bytter paynes of deth. He betoke his spyryte to
the fader of heuē / and than suffred at the last his glo
rious herte to be thozugh percyd with a sharpe spere
for to gyue his herte blood to bye man body and sou
le in to Joye without ende. Yf god of his grete good
nes loued thus mā gyyng hym ouer this wytte &
reason and all other thyng that hym nedeth kyndes
ly a man sholde nyght and dape with all his wyttes
loue hym and feruentely desyre to conne loue suche a
good god that all thyng made al thysse gyueth and
susteyneth. Of this desyre there ben many men and
women whiche haue full grete lpykynge to speke of þ
loue of god and all dape askynge how they sholde los
ue god & in what maner they sholde loue to his pleas
saunce for his endeles goodnes. To suche men & wo
men of that good wyll and that holy desyre I wyll shewe
the fyrste of holy men before this tyme how feruente
some were in the loue of god. Also in how hyghe a de
gree of loue some were byspyt in þ sweteness of cryst
But it may be so that it is full harde for the more par
tye of men and women to come to so hyghe a degree of
loue / therfore after the shewynge of suche hyghe des
grees of loue somewhat I wyll wyte to other of sym
ple knowynge how they sholde loue god as that gras
cyous god wyll gyue me grace. 

How men somtyme loued god & how holy men
sometyme were bysyted with sweteness in the loue
of almyghty god. 

I fynde & rede of oure holy faders in olde tyme
that for the loue of god they forsake the worlde
and all worldely thynges and lyued in wyldernes by
grasse & by rotes / suche men were feruent in the loue
of god. But I trowe there ben but fewe or elles none
that folowen them now / for we fynde not by goddes
lawe or heste that we shold loue so. For all be it they
were kepe & susteyned so it was moost by the myght
and grace of god as no goodnes may be without hy
pet I trowe they lyued so moche by þ strength of kyn
de that was in man tho dayes. I wyl not counseyll þ
to lyue as they dyde / for thou mayst by other maner
lyuynge come to the loue of god as thou shalt se after
warde. Also I fynde furthermoze of other full holy
men of ryght late tyme whiche lyueden a full holy ly
fe & toke theyr lyuelode as febleness of man asketh
now in our dayes. Some of these men as I haue her
de and redde were bysyted by the grace of god with
a passynge sweteness of the loue of cryste / whiche swe
teness for an exāple they shewed afterwarde by theyr
wrytynge to other men folowynge / yf ony wolde tra
uayle to haue that hyghe desyre or degree of loue.

This loue whiche they haue wrytē to other is depar
ted in thre degrees of loue / whiche thre degrees they
hadden one after an other standynge stablyshed in
theyr desyre and suffrynge pacyently for the loue of
god many trybulacyons & temptacyons tyll they co
me by holy cōtemplacyon to þ hyghest degree of loue

of the thre. By this I suppose he that hath grace to come to the fyrste may by goddes helpe come to the seconde / & so with a feruent desyre & good perseueraunce he may come to the thyrde. Shortly I wyll shewe here these degrees of loue / for by cause all men and women that holde rede this haue not knowynge of theym / ne neuer herde speke of suche degrees of loue before tyme. ¶ Degrees of hyghe loue. .i. ¶ The fyrste loue is so feruent that no thyng which is contrary to goddes wyll may ouercome that loue welth ne wo helth ne sykenes. Also he þ hath this loue wyll not make god ones angry for all the worlde withoute ende / but rather suffre all þ payne that myght come to ony creature than ones wylfully dysplease his god in thought or dede. .ii. ¶ The seconde loue is more feruent for þ is so stronge / that what man loueth in that degre all his thought herte & myght is so enterly so besely & so perfyghtely stablyshed in Ihesu cryste that his thought cometh neuer from hym but whan he slepeth. .iii. ¶ The thyrde degre of loue is hyghest and moost wonderfull / for what man cometh to that loue all comforte and all soloce is closed oute of his herte / but onely the Joye of Ihesu cryste. Other Joye may his herte not receyue for swetnesse that he hath of þ Joye euermore lastynge. This loue is so brennyng & so gladyng that who so hath that loue may as well fele the fyre of brennyng loue in his soule / as an other man may fele his fynger brenne in erthely fyre. This loue may well be called a brennyng geloue. And yf men had suche swetnesse in the loue of god of so late tyme I suppose well þ the same we may haue now be the gyfte of god yf we were as feruent

in loue as they were. But these degrees of loue ben
set vpon so hyghe loue to god / y what man sholde ha
ue the fyrste of these thre behoued that he were a sad
contemplatyf man oz womā. And by cause mankyns
de is now & euermore the lenger the febler oz perauē
ture more vnstable / therfore vnethes shold we fynde
now a sad contemplatyf man oz woman. Men of re
lyggon haue taken dyuerse habytes of contemplatyf
lyfe. Men & women also y ben enclosed as it semethe
lyuen a cōtemplatyf lyfe / & so w goddes grace they
do so for the more partye. But for to speke of hyghe
contemplatyf lyfe as holy men lyued before this ty
me it semeth there ben ryght fewe. Therfore I trow
that I may sykerly say that fewe there ben now that
wyl oz may trauayle now to haue suche hyghe de
grees of loue as I haue reherced before. Neuerthe
les what so euer y be y redeest oz herest this / be uener
to slowe to trauayll. For yf thy desyre be sette feruēt
ly & louyngly holdynge the vnworthy to haue so hy
ghe a ghooostly gyfte before an other man & puttest
thy desyre to goddes dysposycyon trustyngly he wyl
dyspose that is best for the / whether thou haste thy
desyre oz haue it not. But it is fyrst nedefull to y that
thou haue other thre degrees of loue that the same
holy men wrote in theyr treatyse / whiche be not of so
hyghe a degree as tho that be reherced before. .i.

The fyrst degree of these is / whan a man oz a wo
man holdeth y cōmaundemētes of god & kepeth hy
selfe out of vddely synne / & is stable in the fayth of ho
ly chyche. Also whan a mā wolde not for none erthes
ly thyng dysplease god / but truly standeth in his de
gree whether he be relygous oz secular. In this ma

ner euery man behoueth to loue his god that wyl be
saued/therfore I counseyll the to haue & kepe this lo
ue oꝝ thou clymbe to ony hyer degrec. .ii. ¶ The se
conde degrec is whan a man forsaketh all the worlde
foꝝ the loue of god/that is foꝝ to save his fader his mo
der & all his kynred & foloweth cryst in pouerte. Also
standeth nyght & daye how clene he maye be in herte
how chaste in body how meke & buxom how clene in
all vertues / & hate all byces soo that all his lyfe be
ghoostly & none thyng flesshely. .iii. ¶ The thyrde
degrec is hyghest foꝝ that is a full contemplatylse lyfe
as whan a mā oꝝ a womā loueth foꝝ to be alone from
all maner noyse And whan that he is saddely sette in
this lyfe and in this loue with his ghostly eyen than
may he se in to the blysse of heuen And than his eyen
be soo enlumyned and so clere lyghted with grace of
ghoostly loue and also thꝛough kyndeled with the gra
cyous fyꝛe of crystes loue that he shall haue a maner
of brennyng loue in his hert euermore lastyng and
his thought euermore bpwarde to god. Thus as I
haue reherced god hath bysytēd his seruautes gy
uyng theym a specyall sauour to loue hym by theyꝝ
holp lyuyng. Many other men and women there be
whiche please god full well standyng truely in theyꝝ
degrec as men & women of the worlde both lordes &
ladys other husbonde men women & wyues. For al
be it they may not come suche hye cōtemplatylse lyfe
it suffyseth them to haue the fyꝛste degrec of these thꝛe
whiche I reherced last foꝝ that euery man is bounde
to kepe. ¶ If thou desyre to haue an hygher degrec of
loue in to the worshyp of god trauaple as other men
dyde & aske helpe and grace with good perscuerauce

pf it please god to perfoyme thy wyl & bynge the to
thy purpose But for as moche as there be many that
haue not a sadde grounde ne but lytell felynge how
they sholde loue and drede god / whiche is spedfull &
nedefull for all men to knowe. Therfore to suche as
be not knowynge I wyl shewe fyrste in what maner
they sholde loue & drede god / that they may be þ mo-
re stable in the loue of god. After that I shall shewe
by the grace of god foure degrees of loue whiche eue-
ry crysten man relygyous & seculer sholde holde and
kepe & may perfoyme for the more partye pf his wyl
be seruently set to the loue of god. ¶ Now than as I
sayd I shall in the begynnyng with the helpe of god
wryte & shewe somwhat of the drede of god that shall
be to his worshyp & proufyte to the reder.

**¶ What is drede / and how a man sholde drede
god.** ✠ 

I Rede that þ drede of god is begynnyng of wy-
sedome. ¶ Drede clerkes haue wryten before
this tyme is in many maners. But I suppose thre
kyndes of drede ben moost nedefull for to knowe. The
fyrst is drede of man or drede of þ worlde. The secōde
is called drede of seruage. The thyrde is called a cha-
sted drede or a frendely drede. .i. ¶ The fyrste
whiche is drede of man or of the worlde is / whan a
man or woman dredeth more the punysshynge of the
worlde as betynge the body or prysounynge than the
punysshynge of the soule. And also whan a man dres-
deth more to lese his temporall goodes in this pas-
singe worlde than to lese the blyss without ende this

Drede is cofited for nought / for god almyghty forbade
this drede whā he sayd thus. Dredeth hym not that
maye slee þ body but rather drede hym that may sen
de the body and soule in to euerlastynge fyre. .ii.

And the seconde drede whiche is the drede of serua
ge is whan a man withdraweth hym or abstepneth
hym fro synne more for drede of þ payne of hell than
for loue þ he shold haue to god. Euerysuche mā what
goodnes he dooth it is not for drede to lese euerlastyn
ge blysse whiche he desyred not / but for drede onely of
suffrynge of grete paynes whiche he dreeded soze this
drede suffyseth not as thou shalte see afterwarde / but
yet it may be good & proufytable. .iii. **T**he thyr
de drede whiche is called a chaste or a frendely drede
is / whan a man dredeth the longe abydynge here for
grete desyre that he hath to be with god. Also whan
he dredeth that god wyll go fro hym / as perauentu
re he withdraweth his grace fro hym. Also whan he
dredeth to dysplease god for the grete loue & dysyre þ
he hath for to please god / suche drede cometh of loue
and þ pleaseth moche god. Take than hede how here
be rehersed thre maner degrees of drede / sle the fyrst
for it is not proufytable. The seconde may be proufy
table / for some men there be whiche drede god by cau
se they sholde not be sente in to hell to brenne there w
the deuyls in euerlastynge fyre. This drede may be
good for by this waye they may come in to the loue of
our lord god as by this waye that I shall shewe. All
be it that thou drede our lord god onely for payne yet
louest thou not god whome þ dreedeste / thou desyrest
not yet goodnes of vertues / but thou withstandest þ
wyckednes of vyces / whā thou withstandest þ wycked

kednes thou begynnest to desyre goodnes. Whan thou
desyrest goodnes and vertues / than cometh in to the
thyrde manere of drede / whiche is called as I layd a
chast or a frendely drede. For than thou drest to lese þ
goodnes and grace that god hath put in the / thou dre-
dest than also to lese the blysse that is ordened for the /
and so by this thou shalte drede god that he forsake not
the / whan thou drest god in this maner thenne hast
thou hym sykerly with the / and so for his loue thou
shalte desyre to be with hym. Thus mayst thou well
knowe how drede of god many brynge the in to the lo-
ue of god / yf thou loue god than thou hast wysedome /
so thus the drede of god is the begynnyng of wysedom
Take heed than and drede god in the maner as I ha-
ue rehersed / for yf thou drede well god thou shalte not
be slowe in his seruyce. He that drest wel god leueth
no goodnes vndo whiche he may do to the pleasure of
god. Yf thou drede god thou wylt kepe his commaun-
dementes / and þ drede that thou hast to god shall bryn-
ge the in to euerlastyng sykernes where thou shalt ne-
uer drede. Of the drede of god wereth a grete deuocyo-
and a maner sorowe with full contricyon for synnes /
thorough that deuocyon and contricyon thou forsakest
thy synnes / and perauenture somwat of the worldely
goodes. By that forsakyng thou lowest the to thy god
and comest in to mekenes / thorough mekenes thy fles-
shely lustes ben destroyed / by that destruccyon all vy-
ces be put out and banysshed awaye by puttyng out of
vyces than vertues begyn to were and sprynge. Of
the synnyng of vertues the clenness of the herte is pur-
chased. By clenness of thy hert thou shalte come to full
possessyon of the holy loue of Ihesu cryste. By these

wordes thou mayst knowe how thou shalte drede for
loue/and how thou mayst come to loue thzugh drede
of god. But the more loue encreaseth in the/the more
drede gooth from the/so that yf thou haue grace to co
me to a feruent loue thou shalte but lytell thynke on
drede for the swetnesse that thou shalt haue in the lo
ue of god. But yet be thou neuer so parfytte it is nede
full that thou drede dyscretly as long as thou art in
this worlde for as moche as I sayd thou mayst come
to loue yf thou drede god/see now furthymore what
is charyte & loue to god. How & in what maner thou
shalt loue hym why thou shalt loue hym. How þ shalt
knowe whan god of his mercy graūteth þ that gra
ce to conne loue hym. ~~~~~

¶ What is charyte and how & why thou shalt lo
ue thy god. ~~~~~


¶ Of foure degrees of loue/and in the fyrst ben fyue
poyntes. **¶** Oreynd loue.

A charyte as I rede is a loue that we sholde ha
ue god/for as moche as he is almyghty god.
Also charyte is a loue wherby we sholde loue our
neyghboure as our selfe for god. And these be two
pryncypall zmaūdemētes of god. The fyrste longeth
to þ loue of god whiche is þ grctest cōmaūdemēt of þ
lawe of god. The.ii. longeth to the loue of thy neygh
bour & this is lyke to þ fyrst / & thus thou hast what
is charyte & loue. See now how thou shalte loue god
thou shalte loue god with all thy herte/all thy soule &
with all vertue as thus. Whan þ puttest away from
the or withstādest with all thy power all thþge that

is pleasynge or lykynge to thy flesshe for the loue of þ
blessyd flesshe of cryst / than thou louest hym with all
thy hert & all thy soule. Of this mater thou shalt her
more afterwarde / but se now ferthermore how thou
shalt loue hy. ¶ The causes why thou shalt loue god
ben without nombze haufge rewarde to his benefay
tes but two causes we haue pꝛyncipally aboue other
Done is for he loueth vs fyrst with all his herte & all
his soule swetely & strongely / swetely whan he toke
flesshe and blood & became man for our loue / strongly
whan he suffred dethe for loue of man. ¶ The seconde
cause is / for ther is no thyng that may be loued moꝛe
ryghtfully ne moꝛe pꝛoufytable. Moꝛe ryghtful is
there none than the loue of hym that made man and
deped for man. Moꝛe pꝛoufytable thyng is there no
ne that may be loued than almyghty god for yf we lo
ue hym as we be bounde he wyll gyue vs Joye and
blyssc without ende where no thyng lacketh but all
thyng is plenteuous & euerlastyng. Se now how
thou shalt knowe whan god putteth grace in þ for to
knowe loue. Whan the trauayle whiche thou hast for
the loue of god is lyght & lykynge to the than thou be
gynnest to haue sauour in the loue of god. For ther is
no maner trauayle greuous ne trauaylous to hym þ
loueth god feruently & trauayleth wylfully for the lo
ue of god. ¶ Also stedfast loue feleth no bytternesse /
but all swetenesse for ryght as bytternesse is systre to
the byce of hatred ryght so swetenesse is systre to þ ver
tue of loue so that in loue is all swetenesse. ¶ Also the
trauayle of louers may be i no maner trauaylous ne
greuo⁹. For ryght as hawkers & hunters what euer
trauayle they haue it greueth them not for the loue &

lykynge that they haue in theyr game / ryght so what
thyng it be that a man loueth & taketh vpon hym a
trauayle for that thyng that he loueth or elles it is no
trauayle / and yf it be trauaylous it lyketh hym to ha
ue trauayle for y^e thyng whiche he loueth. Take than
good hede of these wordes / for yf thou loue god thou
wylt gladly trauayle & suffre for the loue of god / yf thy
trauayle semeth than lyght to the / or ellys yf thou lo
uest or desyrest gladly to haue trauayle for to the loue of
god thou mayst well knowe that god of his grace hath
put in the a begynnynge to come to loue. Whan thou
hast suche a gracious begynnynge withdraue not y^e
loue frome hym for no maner dysease that may fall to
the. For many men & women there be that whyle they
be in prosperyte / that is to say / whyle they be in welth
and in rest gladly they wyl shewe loue to god suche as
they can. But yf god sendeth hym ony dysease or ony
maner of chastysynge anone her loue swageth & that
is no sadde loue. For who so loueth trustyngly and sad
ly he loueth as well in his aduersyte as in prosperyte /
for what god sendeth to vs it is for our proufyte / ther
fore be it helthe be it w^h he sendeth we sholde hertely
thanke hym and not withdraue our loue from hym for
no nede that he hath to our loue / but for grete profyte
that we sholde haue to loue hym / & for his grete good
nes that he wyl chastyse vs here all for our better.
Thus than haue I shewed in fewe wordes what is
charyte and loue to thy god / how thou shalt loue hym /
why thou shalt loue hym / and how thou shalt knowe
whan thou hast grace to conne loue hym. Lerne than
thus to loue & se now ferther more what proufyte and
grace cometh of loue. ¶ In the loue of god ben fyue

gracyous thynges. fyre/lyght/hony/wyne/& sonne
 .i. ¶ The fyrst is fyre clensynge the soule of all maner
 byces thurgh holy medytacyons. .ii. ¶ The secon
 de is lyght shynynge in þe soule with clerenes of ver
 tues thourgh holy prayers. .iii. ¶ The thyrde is ho
 ny makynge swete the soule whan hathe in mynde
 the benefaytes and þe grete gyftes of god almyghty/
 & yeldynge to hym thankynge. .iiii. ¶ The fourth
 is wyne fulfyllynge þe soule with a grete gladnes tho
 rough a swete contemplacyon. .v. ¶ The fyfth is a
 sonne makynge þe soule clere with a shynynge lyght
 in myrthe withouten ende & gladynge the soule with
 an easy hert i Joye & blysse euermore lastynge. Thus
 thou mayst see what proufyte he shall haue that can
 well loue. God than of his grete grace graunt vs hys
 so to loue as it is moost to hym pleasynge. Amen.

¶ Now ferthermore I wyll shewe to þe as I sayd be
 fore foure degrees of loue whiche thou mayst kepe &
 easely come to one after an other yf thou haue good
 wyll. ✠ 

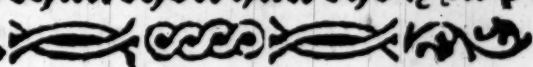
How many degrees of loue there be the fyrst is cal
 led an ordeyned loue or els ordynat loue that
 is to saye a loue ordeyned to be knowne & kepte of all
 maner men & women of euery degree in the worlde.
 To this detyng of loue longen. v. poyntes to be kepte
 ¶ The fyrst is that thou shalt loue thy fleshe onely that it be
 susteyned that thou loue þe worlde to no su
 perfluy that thou loue thy neyghbour
 for god. The second is that thou loue thy frende for his
 good lyuynge. The third is that thou loue thy kenepe for the
 more mede of god.


Bychard Rolle.

B.i.

A The fyrste is / that thou shalte loue thy flesshe
onely that it be susteyned. ✠

The fyrste poynte is as I sayd thou shalte loue
thy flesshe onely that it be susteyned as thus.
Thou shalte take mete & drynke clothynge & all other
thyng that is nedefull to thy body in resonable ma-
ner to kepe thy body in his estate in comferte of thy
soule to trauayle & contynue in the seruyce of god / &
not for to nouryshe thy flesshe in lust & lykynge with
dyuerse delycate metes & drynkes for ther of cometh
foule stynkyng synne & many bodely sykenes mane-
ly whan ther is to moche excelle. This wytnesseth an
holy clerke & sayth they that delyted them in lustes of
þ flesshe they haue full often many dyseases in theyr
flesshe. Also as I rede a soule that is wonte to dely-
tes of the flesshe gadreth togyder many fylthes and
wyckednes. Thou mayst also do no excels for yf thou
vse the to excelle / thou fallest in to the vyce of gloto-
ny / whiche thou knowest well is dedely synne. Of þ
synne I rede thus where þ vyce of glotony repugneth
in ony man leseth þ ghoostly strength yf he had ony
before. And but yf the wombe of glotony be swaged
all his vtues ben cast downe therfore loue thy flesshe
to sustentacyon and not to delytes & to excelle for here
thou mayst well knowe & se that it is good & nedefull
to flee delycacyes. But thou shalt vnderstande here þ
I counseylle the not to forbere ony mete or drynke in
specyall for the vyce of delycacye is not in the mete /
but in þ lust that thou hast in mete therfore sayth an
holy clerke Often we take deynste metes without bla-
me / & somtyme other metes & comyn to euery man

not without gylte of consyence. So thus it semeth
well whan we take ony mete for delyte more than for
sustenaunce we offende god/therfore flee delytes and
lustes of mete & drynke & loue thy fleshe onely that
it be susteyned/and than thou hast the fyrst poynte of
this degree of loue. 

H The seconde is thou shalt loue the worlde to
no superfluyte. 


The seconde poynte is thou shalt loue the worlde
to no superfluyte As thus yf thou loue god
thou shalt not desyre ne loue banytees of the worlde
ne worldely goodes more than y nedeth. Yf god hath
ordeyned the to an hyghe degree in the worlde as for
to be a lord or a lady / or for to haue ony soueraynte
ghoostly or worldely by reason reuerence must be do-
ne to y more than to an other man or woman. For af-
ter that the fyrst man Adā was inobedyent to goodes
cōmaundement it was ordeyned by almyghty god y
man sholde be subgett to mā. Also for as moche as y
people must haue gouernaūce therfore it is reason to
do reuerence to them that haue power & gouernaūce
aboue other. But all be it y y be grete & worldely wor-
shyp must be to do the loue it not ne desyre it not but
mekely yelde all y worshyp to god whiche myght ha-
ue made the a subget there he hath ordeyned y a lord
or a souerayne & thurgh that iowncs thou shalt ha-
ue some grace to withstande y desyre of worldely ba-
nytees. I saye ferthermore yf thou loue the world to
none superfluyte / y shalt not desyre ne loue worlde-
ly good more than the nedeth. As thus thou knowest

Richard Rolle.

B.ii.

well ynough in thy begynnynge wheter þu arte lord
or subgett poore or ryche holde the apayde with thy
degree so that thou haue thy sustenaunce & desyre to
be no greter / but onely as goddes wyl is & as he wyl
dyspose for the. yf thou holde the not payde with that
that god hath sente to the and to thyn a resonable ly
uelode but euer desyrest for to be greter and greter in
the worlde than thou louest the worde to superfluyte
for thou desyrest more than thou nedest & soo by that
foule desyre thou fallest in to the vyce of couetyse whi
che is repleued by goddes lawe as a foule dedely syn
ne. This synne is full peryllous for I rede where that
the synne of couetyse is in a man þu man is made sub
gett to all other vyces. I fynde also that couetyse and
pyrde be as it were one vyce or one wyckednes in so
moche that yet where pyrde reygnech ther is couety
se / & where couetyse reygnech there is pyrde this vy
ce is so wycked & so greuous & as longe as it reygnech
in ony man he shall haue no grace for to drawe to god
warde. This wytnesseth well a full holy clerke saynt
Gregorye & sayth thus in an Omelye. That in none
other wyse we may ne can neuer come ne drawe to þu
begynner & maker of all goodnes / but that we caste
awaye frome vs the synne of couetyse whiche is rote
of all euylles. Than it semeth well yf thou wylt come
to the loue of god thou must flee the synne of couetyse
¶ There thynges there be in þu worlde as I rede whi
che men desyre aboue all other worldly thynges. The
fyrst is recheffe. The seconde is lustes. And þu thyrde
is worshyp. Of rycheffe cometh wycked dedes. Of lu
stes cometh foule dedes. And of worshyp cometh van
nytes. Ryches engedred couetyse. Lustes noyssheth


glotonye & lecherye/and worschyp noryssheth boost &
pyrde. Thus thou mayst knowe what peryll it is to
loue the worlde more than nede is & than thou shalte
kepe the seconde poynthe of this degree.

O The thyrde is thou shalte loue thy neghboure
for god. 

The thyrde poynthe is how thou shalte loue thy
neghboure for god to this thou arte bounde
by the comaundement of god where he comaunded &
sayth thou shalte loue thy neghboure as thy selfe yf
thou shalte loue hym as thy selfe nedes thou must lo
ue hym thou shalte loue hym also for god. Of this lo
ue speketh saynt Austyn & sayth/thou shalt loue god
for hymselfe with all thy herte & thy neghboure for
god as thy selfe/that is to saye/loke where to and for
what thou louest thy selfe so þ shalte loue thy negh
boure. Thou shalte loue thy selfe in all goodnesse & for
god ryght so thou shalt loue thy neghboure for god
& in all goodnes but in none euyl/therfore sayth the
same clerke. He that loueth me þ is to saye his negh
bours he loueth oꝛ shold loue them for they ben good
& ryghtfull oꝛ els that they may be good & ryghtfull/
& that is to saye thou shalt loue them in god oꝛ els for
god & in this maner euery man sholde loue hymselfe
Also of the loue of thy neghbour I rede whan thou
forsakest a synguler prouffyte for þ loue of thy negh
bour tha þ louest thy neghbour Also thou louest thy
neghbour as thy selfe whan þ doost hym no harme
but desyrest the same goodnes & prouffyte ghoostly &
bodely to hym that þ desyrest to thy selfe. Loue thus

thy neyghbour or els þ loue it not god. Tho this accordet an holy clerke & sayth. By þ loue of god the lo-
ue of thy neyghbour is purchased / & by þ loue of thy
neyghbour the loue of god is nourysshed for he þ ta-
keth no hede to loue his neyghbour he can not loue
his god. But whan þ hast fyrste sauour in loue of thy
neyghbour / than thou begynnest to entre in to þ loue
of god. Loue thus thy neyghbour for god & than thou
kepest the thynde poynt of this degree of loue.

A The fourth is thou shalt loue thy frende for his
good lyuyng. 


The fourth poynthe is / thou shalt loue thy frens
de for his good lyuyng. yf thou haue a frende
that is of good lyuyng thou shalt loue hy in double
maner for he is thy frende and for the goodnes that
is in hym / yf he be not good of lyfe but vyceous thou
mayst loue hy but not his vyces. For as I rede par-
fyte frendshyp is whan þ louest not in thy frende þ
sholde not be loued / and whan thou louest in hym or
desyrest to hy goodnes whiche is to be loued As thus
though it be so þ they frende lyueth so folyshly thou
shalt not loue hym foly lyuyng but that he may by
goddes grace amēde hym and be parfyte in lyuyng
For what man it be þ loueth hymselfe in folye he shal
not prouffyte in wysedom. Also the same clerke sayth
in an other place loueth not the vyces of your frēdes
yf ye loue your frendes. Loue than thy frende for his
good lyuyng & than thou shalt kepe þ fourth poynt
of this degree of loue. 

I The fyfthe is thou shalt loue thyn ennemye for
the more mede.


In the seconde degree of loue ben thre poyntes.

Clene loue.

The fyfth poynte is thou shalt loue thyn ennes-
mye for the more mede. A grete dede of chary-
te it is and nedefull to forgyue them þ haue trespaced
ayenst vs w all our herte. **I**t is but lytell goodnes
& full lesse mede to be well wyllynge to hym that doth
the no harme / but it is a grete goodnes & a greter me-
de that thou be well lounge to thyn ennemye. And þ
thou do good & wyl good with all thy power to hym
that doth euyl or is in wyl to do euyl to the with all
his power. Of this mater speketh an holy clerke and
sayth. It is holden a grete vertue amonge worldely
men to suffre pacyently theyr ennemyes / but it is a
greter vertue a man to loue his enemye for that ver-
tue is presented as for sacrefyce before the syght of al-
myghty god. Also to this purpose accorden þ wordes
of cryst where he sayd to his dyscyples. Loue your en-
nemyes do good to theym that hate you / & praye for
them þ perspewe you to displease & for them þ despyse
you that we may be the chyl dren of the fader in heuē
Loue than thyn enemye for þ more mede yf þ wilt ke-
pe þ fyfth poynt of this fyrst degree of loue. **S**hort-
ly thus ben declared to the the fyue poyntes of þ fyrst
degree of loue. In the fyrste yf thou take good hede
thou arte warned and counseyled for the loue of god /
and as thou art bounde by all crysten lawes to with-
stāde the synne of glotonye & all other fleshely lustes
In the seconde poynte to withstande þ foule vyce of

couetyse pryde & all other vanytees of the worlde. In the thre last poyntes to loue thy neyghbour thy fren-
de & all other men for the loue of god and for the more
mede. Loue than god in this fyrst maner of loue / and
thou shalt thurgh his grete grace yf thou wylt come
to the seconde degree of loue. 

The seconde degree of loue is called a clene loue yf
thou wylte come to this seconde degree of loue. þu must
kepe thre poyntes. The fyrste is / that thou loue no
vyce with vertue. The seconde is that thou despyse
alleuyl custome. The thyrde is / that thou sette not
lytell by synne whether it be lytell or grete.

R The fyrste poynte is thou shalte loue no vyce w
vertue. 

The fyrst poynte is / thou shalte loue no vyce w
vertue. As thus what euer thou be in mānes
syght beware that thou be not vycyous Inwarde in
thy soule vnder colour of vertues whiche þu shewest
opely. Our ghoostly enemye þu fende hath many sub-
tyltees to dysceyue mankynde. But amonge all this
it is a grete dysceyte / whan þu he maketh a vyce lyke
to vertue & vertue lyke to vyce. This thou mayst see
by ensample. For all be it that mercy is a gret vertue
where þu it is kepte & in þu worlshyp & in þu name of god
yet it is vycyous where it is do in worlshyp of man &
not of god. Also where true of ryght wysnes is tour-
ned in to vices / whan it is do for þu worldely couetyse
or els for anger or inpayence. The vyce also of pryde
is hyd somtyme vnder mekenes. As whan a man lo-
weth & meketh hymselfe in speche & in berynge to be

holde meke & lowely. Pacience also semeth in many
a man whan there is none. As whan a man wolde ta
ke vengeaunce yf he myght for the wronge that is do
to hym/ but for he may not or els he hath no tyme to
wreke hym on his enemye for þ cause he suffred & not
for the loue of god By these ensamples & many other
thou mayst well knowe that byces somtyme be lyke
to vertues. To this accordeth saynt Iheroni & sayth
thus. A grete & an hyghe connyng it is to knowe by
ces & vertues for all be it that byces & vertues be cō
traryous/ yet they be so lyke that vnnethe the vertue
may be knowe from the byce/ ne þ byce fro the vertue
Be warde therfore & loue so sadly vertues wout ony
faynyng that þ hate all maner byces and so þ mayst
kepe the fyrste poynthe of this degree of loue.

I The seconde is þ shalt hate all euyl customes.

The secōde poynt is thou shalt despyse all euyl
customes. A grete peryll it is to haue an euyl
dede in custome. For as I rede synnes be they neuer
so grete ne so horryble whan they be drawe in to custo
me they seme but lytell to them that vse suche synne
in custome in so moche that it is to them a grete lyk
ge to tell and shewe theyr wyckednes to all other mē
wout ony shame. Of this & suche vsage speketh an o
ther holy clerke and sayth. Whan synne cometh so in
vse that the herte hath a lust & a lykynge ther in that
synne shall full fayntly be withstāde. For whan a syn
ne is brought in to custome it byndeth sore the hert &
maketh the soule bowe to hym that it may not ryse a
gayne & come in to the ryght waye of clene lyfe. For

Richard Rol.

C. i.

whan he is in wyll to ryse/anone he sledeth & falleth
agayne. For this sayth þe same clerke in an other place.
Many there be þe despyren to come out of synne/but
for as moche as they ben closed in the pryson of euyl
custome they may not come out from thei wycked ly
uynge. Also to this purpose I rede that he þe vseth
hym not to vertue in his yonge age he shal not conne
wstande byces in his olde age. Thus þe mayst well se
þe yf thou be vled in ony synne it wyll be full harde to
wstande it. And but thou leue all maner synne to thy
power þe hast none clene loue to thy god therfore with
stande all maner synne & take none in custome tha þe
shalte kepe þe secunde poynt of this degree of loue.

¶ The thyrde is thou shalt not sette lyght by syn
ne be it neuer so lytell.

¶ In the thyrde degree of loue be fyue poyntes.

¶ Stedfast loue.

The thyrde poynte is thou shalt not sette lyght
by synne as thus. What euer synne it be lytell
or grete/drede it ryght dyscretly in thy cōscyence and
set not lytell there by. For as I rede what man that
passed mesure in takynge of his lyuelode as ofte more
than hym nedeth þe man offendeth god /this semeth
to many men full lytell trespas. But this holy man
saynt Austyn sayth. It is no lytell syne for as moche
as we trespas euery daye there in for þe more partye
In as moche as we synne therin euery daye we syne
therin often / & by that we multeplye our synes and þe
is full peryllous /therfore it is nedfull to drede all su
che venyall synnes and sette not lytell by theym. Also

benyall synnes be they neuer so lytell they be moche
to be dradde. Als þ same clerke sheweth by ensample
of lytell bestes where they be many togyder be they
neuer so lytell yet they slee & do moche harme. Also þ
granes of sande be full lytell but yet where a shyp is
ouer charged with sande it must nedes synke or drens
che. Ryght so it fareth be the synne be they neuer so
lytell they be ful peryllous. For but yf a mā be rather
ware & put theym awaye they shall make hym for to
synne deedly. Therfore yf thou wilt haue a clene loue
to god charge in thy cōscyence euery synne lytell and
grete & withstand in the begynnynge & put it out as
soone as god wyll gyue to the grace with contrycyon
confessyon & som almesdedes. And than thou shalt ke
pe the thyȝde poynthe of this degre of loue. Here is re
herced the mater of these poyntes. Thus ben declar
ed the thre poyntes of the seconde degre of loue. In
the fyrste thou art counseyled to loue all vertues and
hate all vyces In the seconde poynthe that thou haue
no synne in blage but that thou boyde it soone & that
thou hate all other euell custome. In þ thyȝde poynthe
that thou art not to lyght of cōscyence but that thou
beware & drede euery synne lytell & grete by counseyll
of thy cōfessour. Yf thou kepe thus these poyntes for
the loue of god than thou louest god in the seconde des
gree of loue that is to saye in a clyne loue. Loue than
saddely in this degre & by goddes grace thou shalt
the soner come to the thyȝde degre of loue.

The thyȝde degre of loue is called a stedfast lo
ue. Yf thou wilt come to this degre of loue þ
must kepe fyue poyntes. The fyrst is thou shalt loue
Rychard Rolle. C.ii.

god with all thy desyre. The seconde is what euer þ
do thynke vpon the worshyp & drede of god. The thyr
de is thou shalt do no synne vpon trust of other good
dedes. The fourth is thou shalt rule the so dyscretly
that þ fayle not for no feruent wyll. The fyfth is that
thou fall not from thy good lyuynge for feynthe herte
or by temptacyon.

N The fyrste is thou shalt loue god with all thy
desyre.

The fyrst poynt is thou shalt loue god with all
thy desyre thou mayst not loue stedfastly / but
thou loue with al thy desyre. An holy desyre it is to de
syre the ptesence of almyghty god for the grete loue þ
thou haste to god. Suche an holy desyre is soo acce
ptable to god as I rede that what man hathe a gre
te desyre all be it he speke not with the tonge he cryed
full loude with the tonge of his herte. And that not
desyret hower he loueth to our syght outwarde /
or speketh to our herynge he loueth not in his herte &
as a double man he is to fore god whiche may not be
herde. Of suche holy desyre I rede also the lenger þ
loue lacketh whiche is so sore desyred the more feruēt
is his desyre whiche abydeth and that desyre begyn
neth to brenne thozugh strength of þ desyrynge loue
in so moche that though the body or the flesshe fayle
þ desyre is nouysshed & encreaced. To this acordeth
saynt Gregoꝛe & sayth / holy desyres wexen & encrea
sen in tarpeuge & abydyge for where desyres fayle in
abydynge there is no sad desyre. Thus thā loue god
stedfastly with all thy desyre / & so thou shalt kepe the

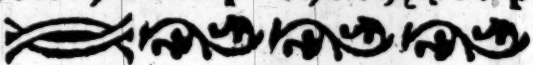
fyfste poynte of this degree of loue. .

O The seconde is thou shalt in þ begynnynge of thy werkes thynke on þ worshyp & drede of good.

The seconde poynte is what euer thou do thynke vpon the worshyp & drede of god. If thou kepe this thou shalt the more sykerly lyue to goddes pleasure. For what dede thou arte in wyll to perfourme in worshyp of god thou mayst be syker of grete mede. Also yf thou drede god þ art aferde for to do ony thynge that shold be dyspleasynge to hym and for as moche as thou drestest thou doost it not. Soo by that drede thou leuest that thþge vndo whiche shold tourne the in to grete peryll of thy soule yf it had ben perfourmed in dede. By this þ mayst well knowe that it is full spedfull to thynke in the begynnynge of all thy werkes vpon the worshyp & drede of god. To this accordeth the techynge of saynt Poule where he sayth thus. What euer ye do in worde or in dede do it in the name of our lord Jhesu cryst. For he that begynneth all thynge in þ name of almyghty god he begynneth in the worshyp of god. Loue thā so stedfastly almyghty god that what euer thou shalt do thynke fyrst in þ worshyp & drede of god & thus thou shalt kepe the seconde poynt of this degree of loue.

The thyrde is thou shalt do no synne vpon trust of other good dedes. †

The thyrde poynt is thou shalt do no synne vpon trust of other good dedes. What man that
Rychard Rol. C.iii.

synneth wylfully he neyther loueth ne dzedeth god. yf
thou synne bpon trust of ony goodnes wylfully thou
synnest so in that y louest not stedfastly. To this pur-
pose I rede also that he is full vnkynde that is full of
vertues & dzedeth not god. Also a grete folye & a gres-
te pryde it is for to synne bpon truste of ony good dedes.
for be thou neuer so full of vertues or goodnes/
vnkynndnes to thy god may destroye all tho vertues
More vnkynndnes mayst thou not shewe than dysplea-
se god wylfully / whiche is begynner and gyuer of all
goodnes / beware therfore & flee suche vnkynndnes / &
do no synne bpon trust of other good dedes. Of suche
vnkynndnesse / also it is nedefull for to beware / for the
more acceptable thou art to god thozugh thy good ly-
uynge / y more culpable shalt thou be yf that thou fal
agayne in to synne and in to euyl lyuynge. ¶ And of
this thou hast ensaple of Adam. for as moche as he
was fulfilled fyrst with goodnes therfore his trespass
was moche the more whan that he fell in to synne. .
¶ Also I rede y it is but a sclyder hope where a man
synneth bpon trust for to be saued / for he that so doth
he neyther loueth ne dzedeth god. And but yf that we
loue and dzeded god to our connyng or knowynge we
maye not be saued / therfore it is more spedefull for to
dzeded well than to trust aynys. Also it is more prouffy-
table a man to holde hymselfe lowe & feble than to de-
syre to be holden stronge / and for feblenes to fall and
be lost. Take hede than what goodnes that god put-
teth in the and thanke hym mekely & praye hym of
contynuaunce / & doo no synne by trust of other good
dedes. And thus thou shalt kepe the thynde poynt of
this degree of loue. 

Q The fourth is thou shalte rule þ dyscretly that thou fayle not for none feruent wyll.

The fourth poynt is thou shalte rule the so dyscretly that thou fayle not to feruent wyll. To kepe this it is nedefull to the to haue þ vertue of dyscrecyon as thus. yf thou take for þ loue of god so moche abstynence wakyng or other bodely penaunce þ thou mayst not for feblenes continue to trauayle in þ seruyce of god than is thy wyll to feruent. For be thy loue neuer so gret god is not pleased whan þ rulest þ in suche maner that thou mayst not abyde in his seruyce thzugh thy myscule. Therfore beware & rule þ by reason take no more vpon the than thou mast be rebely not the to folowe other stronge men or women of olde tyme in doyng of penaunce other wyse thā thy strength wyll aske. And gouerne thy lyf by good counseyll that thou fayle not thzugh thyn owne folye For almyghty god of his endeles mercy hath ordeynered heuens blyss to the synfull men thzugh dedes of charyte & of mekenes where thy be done in mesure & with dyscrecyon. The deuyll is so enuyous to mankynde that somtyme he styreth an vnparfyte man or woman to fast moze than he may begynne thþges of hyghe perfeccyons haupnge no rewarde to his feblenesse in soo moche that whan his bodely strength begyneth to fayle eyther he must cōtynue that he hath begonne so folysly for shame of men / or ellys vtterly leue all for feblenesse. To this accordeth Saynt Austyn and sayth. Our wycked enemye the deuyll hath not a moze spede full engyn to drawe the loue of god from mannes herte than to take vs by his fals sug-

Bychard Rolle.


C.iiii.

gestyon to loue vnwysely & without reason that is to
saye as I sayd before. To styze vs for to take fastyn-
ges wakynge and other bodely penaūces ouer our
myght. Take therfore to the dyscrecyon & rule the so
dyscretly that thou sayle not for to seruent wyll / and
than thou mayst kepe the fourth poynt of this Degre
of loue. ✱

R The fyfthe is / thou shalte not leue thy good ly-
uynge for feynte ne for temptacyon. ✱

The fyfthe poynt is / thou shalte not fall fro thy
good lyuynge for feynte herte ne for tempta-
cyon. To kepe well this poynt it is nedefull to haue a
perseueraūt wyll & a stable hert apenst all temptacy-
ons. Some men there be whan ony heuynesse bodily
or ghoostly or whan that ony grutchynge of þe flesche
cometh to them / anone they ben so heuy and so full of
vnlust that they leue theyr ghoostly trauayle & fal fro
theyr good lyuynge / suche men haue no stable ne sted-
fast herte. Thertoze yf thou wilt loue god stedfastly
suffre no heuynes ne dysease ne chaūge thy trauayle
ne thy herte fro thy serupce and loue of god / but take
hede of the wordes of almyghty god where he sayth.
He is blessyd that is perseueraūt vnto his lyues ende
Here of thou hast ensamples of holy martyrs & cōfel-
sours whiche neuer wolde be departed fro the loue of
god for all the persecucyon that myght be do to them
Also to suche men of feble herte & vnlust speketh saūt
Bernarde and sayth thus. Whan thou art vnlusty or
dyssefed with heuynesse / haue none vntrust therfore
ne leue not thy trauayle / but suffre mekely & aske cōs

forte of hym that is begynner & ender of all goodnes
And and be it that thou haue not suche deuocyon thā
as in other tymes / thynke well how he that gaf þ̄ su
che deuocyo hath withdrawen it for thy defautes as
for a tyme & happely to the more mede / therfore with
stande all suche heuynes and stande stongely / suffre
lowely & take gladly the chastysynge of god / & euer
more aske helpe & grace. Ferthermore some for defau
te of knowynke & for vnstablenes haue fall thorough
trauayle of temptacyons / therfore whan thou art so
trauayled with ony tēptacyons that sholde be lettyn
ge / or eis is dzedefull to the chaunge not therfore thy
wyll / but stande stedfastly & shewe thy dyscase to thy
ghoostly fader askynge of hym to gyue the suche coun
seyll that may be most helpynge to thy soule. Yf thou
do thus mekely w̄ a full good wyll to please thy god &
to withstande the temptacyons of thyn enemye the
grace of the holy ghoost wyll fully fulfyll bothe hym
and the hym for to teche the for to lerne & take of hym
suche counseyll that shall be moost strength & confor
te to the & confusyon to the deuyll. And so by the helpe
of god thou shalt be conforsted in suche maner that þ̄
shalte not fall thorough trauale of temptacyons / but
euer the lenger the more stable and the more stronge
in the loue of god to thy lyues ende. Thus than take
hede that thou fall not from thy good lyuynge for feyn
te hertene by temptacyons and than thou mayst ke
pe the fyfth poynte of this degree of loue. ¶ Here is
shortly declared the mater of these fyue poyntes.
¶ Thus be declared the fyue poyntes of the thyrde de
gree of loue. In the fyrste thou arte taught to loue
god w̄ full desyre. In the seconde for to do all thyng

in the worſhypp of almyghty god / & euer for to drede
god in the begynnyng of all thy werkes. In þe thyrde
de fully to withſtande all maner synne and no synne
for to do vpon truſt of other good dedes. In þe fourth
that thou fall not for defaute of dyſcreccyon. In the
fyfth thou art taught & counſeylled for to haue a ſta-
ble herte and for to withſtande all temptacyons that
thou fall not from thy good lyuynge. Yf þe kepe thus
theſe fyue poyntes than thou haſt the thyrde degree
of loue whiche is called a ſtedfaſt loue to god. And yf
thou loue god ſtedfaſtly thou mayſt ſoone come to per-
feccyon and ſo by the grace of god thowght encreace
of vertues thou ſhaltelyghtly come to the fourth de-
gree of loue. 

In the fourth degree of loue ben. viii. poyntes.

Parfyte loue. 

So how by encreace of vertues thou mayſte come
to perfeccyon. 

The fourth degree of loue is called a parfyte lo-
ue. And other loue there is all be it I make no
mencyon but of foure / whiche is called moost parfyte
loue. Of that loue ſpeketh ſaynt Auſtyn & ſayth. Cha-
ryte is parfyte in ſome men & imparfyte in ſome men
But þe charyte that is moost parfyte may not be had
here whyle we lye in this worlde. Of the ſame moost
parfyte loue ſpeketh the ſame clerke thus. In the ful-
fyllynge of the countre of charyte / that is to ſaye / in
fulfyllynge of heuen wherethat all is loue and charp-
te. This commaundement of god ſhall be fulfylled
wher he ſayth / þe ſhalt loue thy lord god with al thy

herte with all thy mynde and with all thy soule. For
whyle ony fleshely desyre is in man god may not be
loued with all the herte and full mynde. And by this
thou mayst knowe that there is a passynge loue whi
che may not be fulfilled in this worlde and that may
well be called moost parfyte loue. But here perauen
ture some man wyl aske why it is commaundeth
but it myght be performed in this worlde. To that
the same clerke answereth and sayth / that it is skyls
full that suche a perfection sholde be commaunded
at this he sheweth by ensample in this wyse. Ryght
as no man may renne euen and sykerly but he know
whether he shall renne. In the same maner no man
sholde knowe his moost parfyte loue / but it hadde be
shewed in the commaundementes of god. Yf noo man
hadde knowen it no man wolde haue laboured hym
to come therto. ¶ Now sythen it is so we knowe it
well that it is moost parfyte loue we must nedefull lo
ue it and sette vs in a redy waye whyle we be here
that wyl brynge vs euen to that moost parfyte loue.
A more syker waye is there none in this worlde than
the waye of parfyte loue. Wherfore I counseyll the to
haue this fourth degree of loue whiche is called a par
fyte loue that we may come the more sykerly to par
fyte loue. ¶ Of parfyte loue spekethe Saynt Aus
tyn and sayth. He that is redy to deye gladly for his
broder in hym is parfyte loue. To this acordeth the
wordes of cryste where he sayth. No man hath a mor
re charyte in this worlde than he that putteth his sou
le for his frendes that is to saye than he that gyueth
gladly his lyfe for the loue of god to wyne his frendes

des soule This loue is the gretest loue in this worlde
¶ many there be I trowe thurgh the gyfte of god that
haue this parfytte loue/ but yf it thynke the harde to
come to suche an hyghe loue/ be therfore not agast.
¶ For other parfytte loue there is wherin thou mayst lo
ue parfytly thy god as I fynde be the techynge of an
holy clerke where he couseylleth in this wyse ¶ yelde
we vs to god of whome we be made and suffre we not
theym to haue the maystrye ouer vs whiche ben not
of so grete value as we be/ but rather haue we y may
strye ouer theym. As thus lete reason haue the may
strye ouer byces/ lete the body be subgett to the soule
and lete the soule be subgett to god/ than is all y par
feyn of man fulfilled. Thus we sholde lyue by rea
son as y same clerke sheweth by ensample ¶ For as we
put lyuely thynges before them y bo not lyuely. Also
as we put wyty thynges before them y haue no wyte
ne reason. Also ryght as we putte to that ben not de
dely before them that ben deedly ryght so yf we wyl
lyue parfytly we must putte proufytable thynges be
fore them that ben lusty and lykynge. Also put them
that ben honest before them that ben proufytable. ¶
Also putte them that ben holy before them that ben
honeste. And put all thynges that ben parfytte before
them that ben holy. Take hede tha of this for yf thou
wylt lyue after this techynge than y mayst lyue par
fytely/ yf thou lyue parfytely y shalt loue parfytely ly
ue than thus & thou shalt come to parfytte loue. But
for as moche as it is full harde to come so sodaynly to
suche a parfytte loue/ therfore take hed to tho thre de
grees of loue whiche ben rehersed before & begynne

to lyue sadly in the fyrste / & than from þe fyrste clymbe
vp to the seconde / & fro the seconde to the thyrde / & yf
thou be sadly stabled vpon the thyrde thou shalt lygh-
tely come to þe fourth where is all perfeccyon / yf thou
haue perfeccyon þe shalt lyue perfyte. Begyn than
at the fyrste degree of loue / & so encrease in loue & ver-
tues yf thou wilt come to this degree of parfyte loue
I rede that some men begynne to be vertuous / som
encrease in vertues / and some be parfyte in vertues
wyght so it fareth by the loue of god as soone as thou
art in wyll & begynest to loue god that loue is not yet
parfyte but thou must stande fast & nouryshe þe wyll
& yf it be well nourysshed it wyll were stronge & yf it
hath full strength than it is parfyte. To this purpo-
se I rede also that no mā may be sodaynly in so hygh
a degree / but every man that lyueth in good cōuersa-
cyon / whiche may not be wout loue they must begyn-
ne at the lowest degree yf they wyll come to an hyghe
pfeccyon. Thus thā good brother or syster whether
thou be withstāde all byces and gadre to the vertues
for the loue of god and encrease in them tyll they ben
parfytely stabled in the. And amonge all vertues lo-
ke that thou haue a feruent wyll to be besy & deuout
in prayers stande strongely ayenst temptacyons / be
pacyent in trybulacyons & stable in perseueraūt that
thou lyue parfytely & so come to parfyte loue. Take
none hede of them that set lytell by perfeccyon as of
them that saye þe they kepe not to be parfyte it suffy-
seth to them to be lest in heuen or come within the ga-
tes of heuen these be many mēes wordes & they be
peryllous wordes. For I warne þe forsothe what mā
hath not parfyte loue here he shall be purged wth pay-

nes of purgatorie/or elles with dedes of mercy per-
formed for hym in this worlde and so be made parfyt-
te/or he come to heuen blyffe for thyder may no man
come but he be pfyte. Beware therfore of suche lyght
& foly wordes & trust more to thyn owne good dedes
whyle þu art in this worlde than to thy frendes whan
thou art deed/thynke also this lyfe is but short & pay-
ne of purgatorie passe all the paynes of the world the
paynes of hell is euerlastyng/& the Joye & blyffe of
sayntes is euermore duryng. Thynke also ryght as
god is full of mercy & ppyte ryght so he is ryghtfull in
his domes. yf thou wylt thynke on these wordes ofte
I trust to þy mercy of god thou shalt waxe stronge in
vertues & withstande so byces þy within a short tyme
thou shalt come to a parfyte loue whā god hath so by-
syted the that thou can loue hy parfytely thā shall all
thy wylle & all thy desyre be for to come to þy loue whi-
che is moost parfyte that is to saye euermore to se al-
myghty god in his gloryous godhede euermore with
hym to dwell But for as moche as we may not come
to oure desyre/ but we begynne somwhat to loue hym
here in this lyfe. Therfore almyghty god mercyfull
thorough the besechynges of his blessyd moder Marye
graunte vs grace so to loue hym here/þy we may come
to the Joyfull & euerlastyng lyfe where is most par-
fyte loue & blyffe wout ende. Amen. ¶ Here is reher-
ced shortly how by encrease of vertues thou mayst co-
me to perfeccyon & what vertues thou shalt loue.

In this fourth degree of loue whiche is called a
parfyte loue thou art taught & counseyllid to
begynne at a lowe degree yf þy desyre to haue an hygh

degree as thus. yf thou wylt haue this fourth degree of loue thou must begynne at the fyrst & so encrease in vertues tyll thou comic to perfeccyon. But amonge all vtues & all other poyntes whiche ben rehersed be fore fyue poyntes there be as me thynketh spedefull & nedefull euery man to haue & kepe yf ony good dede shall begynne & byynge to good ende. The fyrste is yf thou haue a feruent wyl. The secōde is that thou be bely in deuoute prapers. The thyrde is yf thou fyght strongly ayenst all temptacyōs. The fourth is that thou be pacyēt in trybulacyōs. The fyfthe is that yf be perseueraunt in good dedes. Of these poyntes I spake beforē in yf fourth degree of loue / but for as moche they be not there fully declared my wyl is by the helpe of god to wyte more openly of eche of them one after an other / and fyrste to wyte of good wyl for yf must be begynnynge & endynge of all good dedes.

¶ How good wyl is and may be in dyuerse maners.

Wyl may be in dyuerse maners & is good and euyl / bely & feruent / grete & stronge / but for as moche as reason whiche god hathē gyue onely to mākyde techeth & sheweth i euery mānes cōscyence full knowyge of euyl wyl / & by cause yf good wyl may be in deuerse kydes / therfore I leue at this tyme to speke of euyl wyl & purpose me fully thurgh yf techyng of almyghty god to declare somwhat opely the vtue of good wyl. I crow wel yf euery mā wold be good or wolde do some good dede be he neuer so spfull & pauētūre not chargeth gretly to be good ne belycthy

hym to do good dede. But for as moche as he wolde
good I may not saye but he hath a good wyll. So eue
ry man that wyll well be it strongly or feyntly lytell
or grete and in as moche as he wolde good he hath a
good wyll. Neuertheles though this be a good wyll
it is worthy lytell or no mede for it is no feruent ne be
sy wyll / for he desyret to be good wout any trauayle
and so he suffreth that good wyll passe & charged not
gretly to be good ne to do good dede. But what tyme
he besyeth hym to performe that good wyll in dede /
in that he desyret to be good & besyeth hy to do good
though he haue not fully his purpose ne may not per
forme his wyll in dede / yet there is a feruent wyll & a
besy wyll & I hope a medefull wyll. So þ what man
desyret to be good & to do good dede & therto besyeth
hym to performe that wyll in dede of hym it may wel
be sayd that he hath a feruent wyll / yet is þ wyll but
lytell accounted & feble haunynge rewarde to a grete &
stronge wyll But what tyme thou hast performed in
dede that thou hast so feruently wyllleth thā thou hast
a grete & a stronge wyll / so that of every man that is
in wyll to be good or to do good dedes whan he perfor
meth that wyll in dede it may be sayd sothly of hym
þ is a man of a grete & a stronge wyll. To this accor
deth saynt Austyn & sayth thus. He that wyll do þ cō
maūdemētes of god & sayth he may not but he hath
a good wyll / but that wyll is but letell & feble / for he
may do & kepe the cōmaūdemētes whan he hath a
grete & a stronge wyll. As who sayth what mā hath
a grete & a stronge wyll may keke the cōmaūdemē
tes of god / and but he kepe them he hath no grete ne
stronge wyll. Þf thou wyllt thou mayst kepe the com

maundementes of god / yf thou kepe them thou shalt
be good & do good so yf thou wylte þ̄ mayst do good &
be good. But yet somtyme & ofte it falleth that by the
grace of þ̄ holy ghoost we wyl do somwhat w̄ all our
herte to the worschyp of god that is not in our myght
ne power to performe in dede / whan our wyl is sette
in this maner the goodnes of god is so moche that he
receyueth that wyl as for dede. Of this saynt Austin
bereth wytnes & sayth. What thou wylt & mayst not
do god acoūteþ for dede. Thus mast thou knowe w̄
in thy selfe whā thou hast a lytell or a feble wyl a gre
te or a stronge wyl / & how acceptable a good wyl is
to almyghty god / where thou dost thy besynes to per
forme it in dede. But se now more openly & in specyall
poyntes how þ̄ shalte knowe whan thou hast a good
wyl. Saynt Grego. sayth. We haue a good wyl whā
we drede the harne of our neyghbour as our owne
dysleafe / & whan we be Joyfull of þ̄ prosperyte of our
neyghbour as of our owne proufyte. Also whan we
trowe other mennes harmes as by waye of cōpassy
on / & whan we acounten other mennes wynnynge
our wynnynge as by waye of charyte. Also whā we
loue our frende not for the worlde but for god / & whā
we loue & suffre our enemye for the loue of god. Also
whan we do to no man that we wolde that no man de
do to vs. Also whan we helpe our neyghbour to our
power and in wyl somwhat ouer our power. These
poyntes stande moche by the wyl without dede / but
who so wylleth these fully in his herte to be do hath a
good wyl. And as I sayd before his good wyl shall
be accounted before god as for dede. Thus than haue
I shewed whiche is good & feruent wyl though it be

not perfoꝛmed in dede whiche is a grete and stronge
wyll and how good wyll in some poyntes is accoꝛted
foꝛ dede befoꝛe god all be it that it be not perfoꝛmed/
so that the wyller do his besynes to his power. Take
hede now ferthermoꝛe and beware foꝛ thought thou
heue all these maners of good wyll to thy felynge / it
may be so y^t yet thy wyll is not ryghtfull se how. Be
thou neuer so full of vertues but thou confoꝛme thy
wyll to goddes wyll in all maner thynges bodely and
ghoostly thy wyll is not ryghtfull. To this purpose
saynt Austyn sayth thus. The ryght wysnes of god
is y^t thou be somtyme hole of body and somtyme syke
and perauēture whan thou art hole and in prospery
te than the wyll of god pleaseth the moche and thou
sayst that he is a good god and a curteys yf thou say
so oꝛ thynke so onely foꝛ thou halte helth oꝛ welth of
body thou hast not ryghtfull wyll foꝛ as moche as y^t
confoꝛmest not thy wyll to goddes wyll / but onely in
helth and wyeth. Foꝛ yf he sente the sykenes oꝛ other
dyssease perauenture thou woldest be soꝛy and grutch
ayenst the wyll and the sendynge of god / & soo in thy
wyll thou woldest make the wyll of god / the whiche
may not be but euermoꝛe ryght and euen bowe dow
ne to thy wyll whiche boweth and is full crocked and
in this thou hast neuer ryghtfull herte ne ryghfull
wyll. But what tyme thou dꝛesseth thy wyll that is so
crocked and makest it stande ryght with y^t wyl of god
whiche may not be crocked / but euer standeth euen/
that is to saye noo thyng wyllēth helth ne sykenesse
welth ne wo but euer holdest y^t pleased with the wyll
of god than thou hast a ryghtfull wyll. Also it is ne
defull to a good wyll that it encrease in vertues and

come to the loue of god that it be stable and resonable
What tyme thou arte trauayled soze wth temptac^ons
and grutchest not ayenst goddes wyl but with a glad
herte thou thankest god & sufferest hym lowely & thyn
kest well it is chastysynge to the for thy synnes thaⁿ is
thy wyl stable. And whan thou desyrest not hygh re
warde in blysse for thy good lyuynge or ghoostly tra
uayle whiche thou hast here in erthe but onely at god
des wyl what he wyl dyspose for the & no thyng at
thy wyl than thou hast a resonable wyl. Thus I ha
ue shewed the dyuerse kyndes of good wyl whiche be
full spedefull & nedefull the for to knowe yf thou be in
good wyl to loue god / & yf thou haue a stable & a re
sonable wyl þ^e shalt soone come to parfyrre loue. Now
pauenture thou þ^e trauaylest in ghoostly werkes wylt
th^ege or saye thus somtyme it happed that thou wol
dest do some ghoostly trauayle & thou may not perfor
me it in dede & all be it so thou do it in dede it is full oft
with so grete heuynesse þ^e thou grutche somwhat for
defaute of ghoostly comfort. To this I may answere
as I sayd before / yf þ^e grutche þ^e hast no stable wyl &
yf thy wyl be stable þ^e shalt not dze^ede in this case & se
why. Thou shalt vnderstande þ^e the flesshe is euer cō
traryous to þ^e spyryte & þ^e spyryte ztrarye to þ^e flesshe
herof þ^e hast ensample where saⁿt poule sayd of h^yself
in this wyse þ^e goodnes whiche I wolde do I do not
as yf he had sayd thus some good dedes I wyl & de
syre in my soule / but I may not fulfyll them for feble
nes of my flesshe & all be it somtyme I pforme them
in dede it is wout ony gladnes but what for this tro
west þ^e thapostle sholde therfore lese his mede for the
myght not or els he dyde good sōtyme wout gladnes

May but moche þ more his mede was encreaced for
two causes. fyrste for þ trauaylous werkynge of his
body that he suffred whan the fleshe stryued soo sore
ayenst the goodnes of the spyryte. The seconde cause
is for þ heuynes & trauayle whiche þ spyryte suffred
whan he had no ghoostry 2forte. In the same maner
what euer grutchynge thou hast of thy fleshe ayenst
good dedes or what heuynesse thou sustrest for defau
te of ghoostry conforste be not therfore abasshed so thy
wyl be stable / but suffre & abyde lowely the grace of
god for thy more mede. Be thā stable in wyl & the de
uyl ne thy fleshe shall neuer haue maystrye of þ for
all the deuyls in hell may not make þ to synne but þ
put therto thy wyl. Ne all the aūgels of heuen may
not make the to do good dedes but þ put to thy wyl.
Take hede than that thy wyl be well dysposed to
god & that it be set stably & resonably & than thou hast
a spedefull begynnyng to come to the loue of god / but
for as moche as mānes wyl is ordeyned fyrst & dyspo
sed with the grace of god that he shall wyl good to
haue þ grace in wyl & in all other dede. Prayer me
thynketh is nedeful & therfore somwat I wyl wyte
of prayer as god wyl gyue me grace.

U What partyte is in prayer and in what maner
thou shalt praye. ✠

Payer is ensample of good lyuynge & is most
spedefull to gete grace & to drawe men to loue
god. A deuote prayer & often vsed purchaseth grace
of almyghty god & putteth awaye the fals suggesty
ons of the fende & stablysshed a man in all goodnesse.

Therefore god sayth to his dyscyples thus. waketh & prayeth that ye fall not in temptacyons. Ryght as it is nedefull for a nyght that shall go in to batayll haue with hym armoure & wepen ryght so it is nedefull & spedefull to euery crysten man to haue with hym cōtynuell prayer for what of our owne freelte what by malpce & enuye that the fende hath to vs we be euer in this worlde in ghoostly batayll more oz lesse by the suffraunce of our lord god. Therefore sayth saynt Gregory þ more we be trauapled w̄ thoughtes oz flesshely desyres the more nede we haue to stande besyly in prayers. So thus þ mayst se that prayer is spedefull & nedefull. Also prayer as I rede is a souerayne helpe to tho soule conforte and solace to thy good aungell torment & payne to þ deuyll acceptable seruyce to god parfyte Joye/sad hope/& ghoostly helth without corrupcyon. ¶ Prayer is also a nedefull messenger from euery mannes soule to almyghty god in heuen & namely from that mannes soule whiche is moche troubled & hath no reste. Some dyscyces there be whiche be good that is to saye be well ruled & be in reste to suche prayer is also a nedefull messenger to holde þ soule in ghoostly confort & to encrease it & stable it in goodnes. But there be many other men & womē of dyuerse conscience. Some there be that haue a bad conscience whiche be in rest & not troubled & that ben they that ben sette fully to euyll & not to good Some haue a bad conscience & somewhat be troubled in theyr cōscience & tho be suche þ be somewhat euyll oz begynne to be euyll Some haue good consyēce & also ben greued in theyr conscience & be suche as lyue euyll & begynne to be good. Whyle the conscience is thus trou

bled the soule hath no reste / therfore to puttye for
helpe & grace prayer that nedefull messenger must do
well his offyce that is to saye besely without ony tary
enge & strongly without ony feynynge & rather co
me to the presence of almyghty god hy nedeth to ha
ue two sprecyall frendes y is to saye stedfast fayth and
trusty hope with these two frendes prayer taketh his
waye & renneth fast to y pates of heuen & entred with
out ony lettynge for he goth to the presence of y good
lorde truly to do his message with full fayth & sad ho
pe full pyteously he sheweth his nedes & the perylles
of his soule. Than anone the good lord so full of pyte
& mercy sendeth his blessyd loue in to y soule thozugh
the pursute of that good prayer. Whan this loue en
terth in to that soule anone he maketh all glad y was
full elenge & soz he maketh in peas & reste that was
soz troubled. Hope cometh agayn that was out and
ghoostly strength y was awaye is fully restor. Whā
the enemyes of the soule that is to saye the fendes se
this helpe & confort to the soule with sorowfull chere
they tozne awaye & thus they begynne to crye. Alas
alas sorowe & wo is come to vs / fle we fast awaye for
god fyghteth for this soule. Thus manes soule is de
lyuered fro the fende by prayer / & so it may sothly be
sayd that prayer is a spedefull & a nedefull messenger
fro mānes soule to almyghty god in heuen. Thus y
hast herde what is prayer se now ferthermore how y
shalt praye. Als often as thou prayest oz what euer
thou prayest put all thy wyll in goddes wyll in the en
de of thy prayer desyrynge euermore in euery askyn
ge his wyll to be fulfyled and no thyng thy wyll. For
thou mayst praye & aske some thyng y thy wyll not

here ne graunte as yf þ þ praye for soules þ be damp-
ned thy prayers is not accepted Also it may so be that
thou desyrest not that is moost helpynge to thy soule
ne to other perauenture for whom y prayest. Also ma-
ny men prayed somtyme for no good entent and for
that they be not herte. Therfore to be alwaye syker
whā euer thou prayest put thy desyre and thy entent
in askynge in goddes wyl for he knoweth all thynges
and what euer thou prayest he wyl not graunte it the
but that is moost proufytable for the. To this accor-
deth an holy clerke and sayth. Of tentyne god graun-
teth not many men at theyr wyl for he wyl graunte
then other grace thā they aske to more helth of theyr
soules. So þ it is nedefull that we put all our askyn-
ge in to his ordynaūce. To this accordeth saynt Ber-
narde & sayth. No man sholde set lyght by his pray-
er for he to whom we praye after tyme the prayer is
passed from our mouth or from our herte he wyrteth
it in his booke and trustyngly we may hope that he
wyl graunte that we aske or ellyst hat is more prou-
fytable to vs. Thus thā what euer thou prayest put
all thy wyl in to goddes wyl. Also whā that thou
prayest thou shalte praye generally that is to saye as
thou prayest for thy selfe so thou shalt praye for other
Thus thou must do for thre causes. Fyyste for loue
and charyte wyl that thou do so. And therfore sayth
the apostle. Prayed eche of you for other that ye may
be saued. The secoude cause is / for the lawe of god
wyl that euery man helpe other in nede. This thou
hast by the techynge of saynt poule where as he sayth
thus. Eche of you bere others burthen that is for to
say / that eche of you praye for other or helpe other in

3
nede & so ye shall fulfill the lawe of cryste. The thynde
de causes is / for who so prayeth for all other as for hy
selfe / y goodnes of god wyl that he shall be partynner
of all other mennes prayers. To this acordeth saynt
Ambrose & sayth thus. yf thou pray onely for thyselfe
and for none other than shall none other praye for the
but thy selfe / & yf thou praye for all other thā all other
shall praye for the. Thus than whan y prayest praye
for all other. Also whan thou shalt praye thou must
praye with full herte & put awaye fro y all vanytees
of the worlde all ymagynacyōs & all ydel thoughtes
To this acordeth an holy clerke & sayth. Whan we
stande to praye we must with all our hertegge our
entent to that we praye that is to say we must voyde
all flesshely & all worldely thoughtes & suffre not our
herte other wyse to be occupied than about our praye
er But to this perauenture thou sayst that though y
be neuer in so good wyl to praye thyn hert is awaye
from thy prayer & encombred with dyuer thoughtes
that thou mayst haue no whyle thyn hert sadly vpon
thy prayer. To this I graūte y what y fende whiche
euer is besy to lette all goodnes & what throught y vn
stablenes of man thyn herte shalt not be stable vpon
thy prayer I trowe scarsely the tyme of a Pat noster
But whā thou go to thy prayer take good hede what
nede thou hast to praye what thou wylt praye & how
grete how myghty & how ryghtfull & mercyfull he is
to whom y wylt praye. yf thou set thyn herte thus in
the begynnynge of thy prayer / thou shalt not I trow
gretly be letted & though it be so that somtyme thou
be letted with other thoughtes / fyght ayenst them w
all thy besynes / & anone tourne to thy prayer. yf thou

wylt fyght wylfully in this maner god of his grete
grace & endeles pyte wyl alowe thy good wyl & mo-
che þ rather for thy trauayle graunte that þ askest.
Thus than whan þ wylt praye þ must praye w full
herte. Also an other maner prayer there is þ who soo
hath grace to come therto his prayer shall soone be
herde yf he praye resonably. This maner of prayer
is whan thou art vylited be the grace of god w grete
conpuncyon of herte and swetnes of deuocyon. Con-
puncyon is a grete loue of thy soule spz yngynge out
of thy hert with teeres of thyn eyen. Whan þ bethyn-
kest the vpon thy synnes & vpon the dredefull dome
of god. Whan þ hast this conpuncyon & these teeres
than þ haste full deuocyon with suche deuocyon bese-
ly praye for all tho that haue nede/for what thyng þ
prayest in þ tyme so it be worshyp to god þ art anone
herde without ony taryege for as I rede prayer pea-
sed almyghty god & maneth hym toz ne to mercy but
whan deuoute teeres come w prayer than of his gre-
te pyte he may no lenger suffre but anone as he w re-
cōstrayned he graūteth what we aske. Ferthermore
yf þ be vled to suche deuocōn þ shalt feruently desyre
to conne loue god & so by goddes grace þ shalt soone co-
me to loue thus thā loue prayer yf thou wylt come to
þ loue of god. And for as moche as many men & wo-
men be moche trauayled by dyuerse temptacyons or
they come to loue/therfore beware of theym & sooner
to wstande them somwhat I wyl shewe of tempta-
cyons as me thynketh is nedefull. .

X How þ mayst beware & knowe of temptacyons
wakyng or slepyng & how þ shalt wstade them.

Richard Rolle.

C. i.

By the ordynaunce of almyghty god there be oꝝ
deynde good aungels to defende vs fro euyl &
to styꝛe vs to vertues and to kepe vs in goodnes. .
Also other badde aungels & euyl spyꝛytes there be
whiche trouble mankynde w̄ dyuerse temptaꝙns to
pꝛeue mannes stablesnes & that to grete mede to man
nes soule. The power of this wycked spyꝛyte that is
to saye the fende is so grete ꝑ the moꝛe a man bespyeth
hym to please god ꝑ rather he is about to greue hym
foꝛ as I rede oftymes it happeth ꝑ many men whā
thꝛy gꝛue them hole to contemplacyon oꝛ to other de
uocyons than they be trauayled with stroꝛge tempta
cyons by suffraũce of god that they may knowe theyꝛ
owne feblenes & to kepe theym meke & lowe foꝛ they
sholde not lese ꝑ grete mede of god foꝛ ony maner spyꝛ
te of pryde whiche mede is oꝛdeynde foꝛ theyꝛ ghoost
ly trauayle. Also in what euer maner of lower degree
man oꝛ womau be that wyll withstande synne to his
power & lyue after the techyng of goddes lawe to all
suche the wycked spyꝛyte hath enuye & euermore gꝛ
ueth theym some maner of batayll grete oꝛ lytell fles
pyng or wakpyng. Other men & women there be
that he suffreth to be in reste & peas / & tho ben suche
as drede not god / but nyght & daye gꝛue them to all
maner lustynges & lykynges of theyꝛ fleshe foꝛ they
ben so redy to synne & to do his wyll that hym nedeth
noo to styꝛe them to euyl / & therfoꝛe he suffreth them
in peas & without ony trauayle of temptacyons. Of
suche men speketh saint Austyn & sayth thus Some
men & women profer theymselfe to synne wyllfully &
abyde not the temptacyons of the fende / but they go
befoꝛe the temptacyons & be redyer to synne than the

fende is to tempte them. And sythen it is so that eue-
ry man whiche is besy to please god shalbe trauayled
and pryued with dyuerse temptacyons I wyl shewe
the to my felynge and as I rede of other auctours þ
maner of begynnynge of euery temptacyon that thou
mast beware of them & rather withstande the begyn-
nyng & so ouercome the hole temptacyon. ¶ I rede
that our enemye the fende whan he wyl make vs to
folowe his wyl or ellys for enuye wyl trauayle and
greue vs he begynneth with fals suggestyōs that is
to saye he putteth in our myndes dyuerse ymagyna-
cyons as worldely & fleshely thoughtes & somtyme
other thoughtes whiche be full greuous & peryllous
eyther to make vs haue a grete lust & lykynge in the
that be worldely or fleshely / or ellys to brynge vs in
grete heuynes or drede thugh tho thoughtes whi-
che be greuous & peryllous. As to þ worldely or fles-
shely thoughtes yf we sufre theyn to abyde in oure
herte so longe wylfully tll we haue lykynge in them
than hath the deuyl wonne a grete stronge warde of
vs & pursyeweth ferthermore with all his besynes to
make vs assent to hym as in wyl to performe it in de-
de. By that dede thou mayst vnderstande eucry dede
ly synne after the suggestyon is in þ begynnynge To
some he begynneth with a fals suggestyon of pryde/
or ellys of couetyse / to some with a suggestyon of glo-
tonye or lecherie and so of all other synnes wherin he
supposeth soonest to haue maystrye ouer man for eue-
ry man is enclyned more to one maner synne than to
another. And where he hath maystrye that is to say
where that synne is performed in dede he besyeth hy
sofe to brynge it in to custome & so thozugh the custo-

me to haue vs holebnder his power. Go fle & withsta
de all these perylles the prophete Dauid sayth in the
sawter. Go waywarde oz bowe awaye from euyl &
do good / that is to saye after the expolycyon of y^e do
ctours. Go from the euyl of suggestyon from the sug
gestyon of entysynge from y^e euyl of delytynge from
the euyl of assentyng from the euyl of dede & frome
the euyl of custome. Withstande than all suche worl
dely oz flesshely thoughtes as moche as god wyll gy
ue y^e grace y^e thou fall in none of these euylles whiche
as I haue sayd be full peryllous. Ferthermore as to
y^e greuous thoughtes y^e peryllous pauenture y^e wylt
aske whiche be tho thoughtes y^e belo greuous & pes
ryllous All tho thoughtes that y^e hast ayenst thy wyl
whiche make the heuy oz soz be greuous. And soz to
shewe the more openly what man y^e ymagyeth vpon
hyghe maters y^e be ghoostly whiche passe all erthely
mennes wytte. As vpon y^e sayth of holy chyche oz
suche other that neden not to be specifed at this tyme
for y^e man hath greuous thoughtes & peryllous. yf
we suffre suche ymaginacyons abyde & take none he
de in the begynnyng to the fals suggestyon of fende
win short tyme oz euer we be ware eyther he wyl ma
ke vs lese our kyndely wytte & reason oz ellys he wyl
brynge vs to vnrasonable drede. Of suche tempta
cyons it is nedefull to be ware & put them awaye yf
thou may w deuoute prayers & other occupacyons &
yf thou may not boyde them suffre them than esely.
For y^e shalt vnderstade y^e they be ryght nedefull & me
defull for thy soule / for but it were so y^e suche though
tts come somtyme in to thy mynde y^e sholdest seme in
thyselpe that y^e were an aungell & no man. therfore it is

nedefull that thou be tempted otherwyle with euyl
thoughtes that thou mayst se & knowe thyn owne fe
blenes & vnstablenes whiche cometh of thy selfe and
that þu mayst fele the strength whiche þu hast onely of
god. Also thou shalt suffre suche thoughtes esely but
thou mayst vopde them / for all suche thoughtes so þu
thou delyte the not in them they ben a grete purgyn
ge for thy soule & a grete strength to kepe within the
vertues & all be it þu they be sharpe & bytter for the tyme
me thynke well þu they shal make thy soule clene that
was ryght foule & make it hole that was ryght syke
& bypunge it in to everlastynge lyfe & helthe wout ende
to the whiche lyfe & helth may no man come without
grete sharpenes & bytternes. Also whan þu arte tras
uayled wth thoughtes whiche þu mayst not put awaye
thynke well that it is a grete ryght wysnes of god þu
thou haue suche thoughtes for ryght as þu hast had
full often thy wyl & lykynge in worldely and flesshely
thoughtes ayenst the wyl of god ryght so it is þu wyl
of god þu thou haue other thoughtes ayenst thy wyl
But yet it is good that thou beware of them & that þu
drede them dyscretly and truste stedfastly in god. For
whan þu soule hath no delyte in suche thoughtes but
hateth & lotheth them / than they be a clensynge & a
grete mede to þu soule / but yf it so be þu there come som
tyme ony lykynge of synne or of eny vanyte thorough
suche thoughtes / than withstāde & thynke that it is
a fals suggestyon of þu deuyll / & therewith be drededfull
and soye that þu hast offended god in lykynge of suche
fals ymagynacyons. I rede that for suche thoughtes
onely þu shalt not be dāpned though they be come
into thy mynde / for it is not in thy power to let them

to come. But yf it be so that þ assent oz delyte in them
than beware for there thou dyspleasest god. Also it is
good that þ drede god though þ assente not to yvill
thoughtes that þ fall not for pryde. For eche man that
standeth in vertues standeth onely by þ vertue & gra
ce of almyghty god. Thus thā beware of thoughtes
for here þ mayst se that all temptacyons begynne w
fals suggestyons of the wycked spyryte. And yf þ has
ue grace withstande suche thoughtes þ shalte ouer
come al suche temptacōs. And for þ moost souerayn
remedy ayenst all maner temptacōs it is good that
þ shewethy dysseale to thy ghoostry fader as oft as it
nedeth els to some other good man of ghoostry lpyyn
ge as I sayd befoze in þ fyfth poynt of þ thyzde degre
of loue. Ferthermore to speke of temptacyons. I res
de that whan the wycked fende may not ouercome a
man wakþge than is his besynes to trauayle & to ta
ryþge hym slepynge. And that is to dysceyue hym yf
he may i thre maners. One is to begyle hym thzugh
glad & confortabte dremes. The seconde is to greue &
to lette hþ thzugh sorowfull & dredefull dremes. And
the thyzde is to make hym the rather assent to synne
wakþge thzugh foule syghtes oz other dyuerse bany
tees whiche he suffreth slepynge / thefoze it is good to
beware of dremes for in some thou mayst well byleue
& some it is good to sette at nought for somtyme god
sheweth cōfort to wycked men slepynge þ they sholde
the rather leue theyz synne / & somtyme he comforted
good men slepyge to make them moze feruent in his
loue / but for as moche as þ myghtest lyghtly be dys
ceyued thzugh suche illusyōs. I cōseyll þ to put the
all out frō thy herte oz els to shewe the to thy ghoostry

frendes. For oftymes he that hath moche lykynge in
dremes is moost taryed & out of reste. Also þu shalt not
drede suche dremes what soeuer they be / for as I re-
de yf thou be stable in the fayth of holy chyrche / yf þu
loue god with all thy herte / yf þu be obedyent to god &
to thy souerayne what euer þu be as well in aduersyte
as in prosperyte. And yf þu put all thy wyll at goddes
dysposycyon than shalt þu drede no maner of dremes
for though they be dredfull & sorowfull to thy syght
be therfore not agast ne heuy but trustygly put all to
gyder in to goddes hande he to ordeyne for the as he
wyll. Also though they be to the syght glad & cōforta-
ble desyre them not ne blyue not in them but yf it be
that they toke to the worschyp of god yf þu do thus by
the grace of god þu shalt ouercome all temptacions sle-
pyng. Thus than slepyng & wakynge yf thou with-
stande in the begynnynge þu fals suggestyons of that
wycked aungell þu is to save wycked thoughtes & peryl-
ous ymagynacions as I sayd before than þu shalt
ouercome all temptacions. To this accordeth saynt
Austyn & sayth. Yf we withstande the last & lykynge
of viciene thoughtes there sholde no synne reygne in
our dedely bodyes. Withstande than thoughtes & be
stroge ayenst temptacions / & so thurgh that ghoostly
strength þu shalt lyghtly come to the loue of god. And
for as moche as suche temptacions & ther worldely
trybulacions fall oftentymes to goddes seruauntes
in to grete mede of theyr soules so that they can suffre
them mekely & thanke god therfore. I wyll shewe a
fewe confortable wordes of the vertue of pacyence by
the whiche þu mayst be styred for to suffre bodely and
ghoostly displeases gladly for the loue of god. .

Byrhard Rolle.

C.iii.

¶ How thou shalt be pacient & what tyme pacyence is moost nedefull. ✠

A charyte whiche is moder & keper of vertues is lost full often by inpacience. To this acordeth saynt Gregorpe & sayth thus Men that be impacient whan they wyl not suffre gladly trybulacyons / destroye the good dedes whiche they dyde whyle þ soulle was in peas & reste / & sodaynly they destroye that ghooostly werke that they haue begonne by good auysement & grete trauayle By these wordes it semeth þ it is nedefull to kepe with vs the vertue of pacyence yf we sholde come to the loue of god for without encrease of vertues we maye not come to þ loue. To speke than of pacyence I rede y in prosperyte it is no vertue to be pacient / but what man is troubled with many aduersytees & standeth stably hoppyng in the mercy of god he hath the vertue of pacyence. ¶ In thre maner of wayes goddes seruautes haue nede to be pacient in tribulacions. The fyrst is whan god chastyseth them with his rodde as with losse of wordely goodes or ellys with bodily sykenes. The seconde is whā our enemye þ fende trauapleth vs with dyuerse temptacyons by the suffraunce of god. The thyrde is whā our neyghbours do to vs wronge or despytes. In eche of these thre our enemye besyeth hym to bynge vs out of pacyence & in eche of these we shold ouercome hym yf we be pacient. As thus yf we suffre easely & gladly the chastysynge of god without ony grutchynge Also yf we delyte vs not in the fals suggestyons of the fende & assente in no maner to his wycked temptacyons Also yf we kepe vs sadly i charyte whā we suffre ony


wronges or delytes of any of our neighbours / thus
we sholde ouercome that wycked fende with the ver-
tue of pacyence. I sayd as for the fyrst we shold ouer-
come the fende yf we suffre easely & gladly the chasty-
synge of god without ony grutchynge this is good yf
we suffre for it is for grete loue whiche he hath to vs
& so grete mede that he wyl ordeyne for vs. To this
purpose saynt Austyn spekeþ & sayth thus to eche
mānes soule callynge yf soule doughter & sayth thus
Doughter yf thou wepe vnder thy fader wepe not wth
indygnacyon ne for pryde for that thou suffrest is for
medycyne to the & for no payne it is a chastysynge &
no dampnacyon yf thou wylt not lese thyn herytage.
But not from the that rodde / take no hede to the shar-
pencs of that rodde / but take good hede howe well
thou shalt be rewarded in thy faders testamēt These
wordes may be remeued to euery crysten man & wo-
man as thus. Yf our fader in heuen shold chastyse vs
wth losse of goodes or wth sykenes of body we sholde not
grutche / but we sholde be sozry yf we trespaced ayenste
our fader & take mekely his chastysynge & euer aske
mercy. His chastysynge is helpe to our soules & rules
of grete penaunce his chastysynge is but a warnynge
for loue & not durynge for wrath we sholde not be put
out frome the herytage of heuen it is nedefull we be
borym to our fader in heuen & suffre lowely & gladly
his ryghtfull chastysynge for our greuous trespassyn-
ge that thzugh the vertue of pacyence we may come
to that grete herytage / that is to saye to the blyss of
heuen to yf whiche he ordeyned vs i his last testamēt
that was whan he gafe for vs his herteblood vpon yf
crosse. Thus we must suffre gladly the chastysynge of

god wout grutchynge. This chastysynge as I sayd
is somtyme in sykenes of body / & somtyme in losse of
worldely goodes. Yf thou be chastysed with sykenesse
of body / haue in thy mynde the wordes of the apostle
whan he sayd thus. All be it that our body outwarde
be corrupted with sykenes our soule within is made
newe & more clene frome daye to daye. Also yf we be
chastysed w losse of goodes / take hede to y pouerte of
Job where y may haue a grete exāple of pacyēce for
with gretethankynge to god he toke full mekely &
gladly grete pouerte sykenes & many dysleases & sayd
Our lord gafe / our lord hath take a waye / as it plea
seth hy so it is do / blessyd be the name of y lord. Jesu
Thus y hast example to suffre gladly y chastysynge
of god. I sayd also as for the seconde we sholde ouer
come y fende yf we delyte vs not in his fals suggesty
ons / & yf we assente in no maner to his wycked temp
tacyons. In the laste chapytre before thou hast how
thou shalt be stronge & stable ayenst all temptacyons
Se now more openly why y shalt gladly suffre temp
tacyons without ony grutchynge One skyll is for yf
thou suffre the not gladly but grutchest ayenst them
than y lettest the that sholde helpe the / the whiche be
good aūgels & other sayntes & helpest thyn enemyes
whiche be wycked fendes for a greter confort is none
to theym but whan they fynde a man heuy and grut
chynge / therfore suffre them gladly and aske helpe &
mercy of hym in whom all grace is and conforte. Also
yf thou suffre suche temptacōs gladly and assentest
not to them in lykynge ne in wyll than thou stoppest
the fende that he dar not assayle the with other temp
tacōs for he dzedeth to be put out from the & be ouer

come whan he feleth the so stable & so pacient that is
a grete drede to hym. For whan he trauayleth a mā
with temptacions and he be withstande than be his
paynes moche the more encreased in hell withstande
than his temptacions with the vertue of pacyence &
so thou shalt overcome hym. ¶ As for thynde waye
of pacyence I sayd þ̄ we sholde kepe vs sadly in chary-
te whā we suffre wronges or despytes of other neygh-
bours suche wronges it is nedefull to suffre for the lo-
ue of god. For as saynt Austyn sayth he that is so pa-
cilent that gladly wyll suffre wronges shall be ordey-
ned grete and myghty in heuen. If than thy goodes
be taken from the wrongfully suffre esely and thynke
in thy herte that thou came naked i to this worlde
& no better than naked shalt thou go away out of the
worlde. Also thynke vpon þ̄ wordes of þ̄ apostle whe-
re he sayth. Nought we brought in to this worlde &
no thyng we may bere with vs / thynke vpon these
wordes þ̄ I trowe they shall styre the moche to pacy-
ence. If thou be dyspleased or defamed wrongfully
thynke vpon the wordes of cryst whan he sayd thus
to his dyscyples. ye be blessyd whan wycked men cur-
se you or despyse you wrongfully whā thy pursewe
you or saye ony euill makynge lesynges apenst you
wrongfully Joyeth than & be glad for your mede is
plenteous in heuen. These wordes me thynketh shol-
de make the to suffre gladly despytes & euill wordes
It falleth somtyme that some mennes hertes be full
grete & stoute by pryde & inpacyence. But goddes ser-
uautes whan they se suche men so dyscased and tra-
uayled in theyr soules haue grete cōpassyon of them
knowynge well þ̄ it cometh of vnstableness of herte

and of wycked sterpyng of the flesshe / & therfore they
suffre wycked & angry wordes for þy tyme poppyng þy
after so grete noyse shall come some maner ease & low
nes of herte they suffre also for þy tyme for they knowe
well it is full harde a man to euercome hymselfe / for
thys cause every good man sholde gladly suffre an
gry wordes Also some men and women there be that
wyl not suffre / but for one wycked worde they saie
an other and take noo hede to the rewarde that they
sholde haue of god yf they wolde suffre suche men all
daye fall in temptacyons for angre of herte and for
inpatyence / therfore what euer thou be that art despy
sed of thy neyghbour suffre gladly & fayne þy as thou
herdest hym not vnto þy tyme that his herte be eased
and than yf it be suche mater that chargeth þy mayst
speke to hym in easy maner and yf it is no charynge
than it is no force though thou holde thy peas and an
swere ryght nought. Thus I haue shewed þy exam
ples for to styrre the to patyence. fyrst how thou shalt
gladly suffre the chastysyng of almyghty god as sy
kenes of boby or ellys losse of goodes. ¶ The seconde
how thou shalt gladly suffre the temptacyons of the
fende. And the thyrde how thou shalt gladly suffre
wrynges and despyssynges of thy neyghbour. But
now ouer all the ensamples I counseyll the for to ha
ue one thyng specyall in thy hert the whiche shall be
a generall ensample of patyence to suffre gladely all
mener trybulacyons for the loue of god. This eniam
ple is for to haue euermore in thy mynde in eche dysa
se the grete pouerte trybulacyon and the bytter passy
on of Ihesu cryst goddes sone whiche he suffred glad
ly & wylfully for the loue of all mankynde. ¶ Of this

good lord spebeth saynt Bernar. & sayth thus. Cryst
goddes sone of heuen frome the tyme þ he came out
of the glourious maydens wombe Marye had neuer
but pouerte & trybulacyon tyll he went to suffre deth
whiche maner of deth it nedeth not at this tyme for
to shewe it to the. For þ haste it openly by þ techynge
of all holy chyrche. Haue than sadly in thy mynde as
moche as god wyll gyue the grace / how gladly how
lowely & what he suffred for the & þ thought I trowe
shall make the to wyne the vertue of pacyence & to
encreace in other vertues / & so forth within a whyle
to come to þ loue of god. And now ferthermore for as
moche as all þ vertues be moost pleasynge & accepta
ble to god whiche be stynued & brought to good ende
therfore to strengthe þ in these vertues I wyll shewe
the now some wordes of þ vertue of perseueraunce.


3 **H**ow perseueraunce is nedefull / & how þ mayst
be perseueraunt. 

Perseueraunce is fulfyllynge & ende of all ver
tues keper of all goodnes without whiche pe
seueraunce no man may se god. But thou be perseue
raunt þ mayst haue no mede thanke ne worshyp for
thy seruyce. Yf thou be perseueraunt thou shalt haue
mede for thy true seruyce / & a grete rewarde for thy
ghoostly trauayle & a worshypfull crowne of byctorye
for thy stronge batayle. Of this mater þ hast before
in þ fyfth poynt of the thynde degree of loue therfore
at this tyme it nedeth not to speke but lytell more as
of this purpose. But I counseyll the in fewe wordes yf
thou wilt be perseueraunt in goodnes that þ trauaylest

to wyne the vertue of pacyence wherof I haue tou-
ched somwat in the laste chapytre before. For many
men begynne full well and ende theyr lyfe full peryl-
lously & the cause is for the more partye Inpacyence
for they wyl not suffre gladly temptacyons & other
trybulacyōs. For whan they fele neuer so lytell dys-
seghoostly or bodily anone they fall awaye from ver-
tues & torne agayne to synne And often it falleth that
some men fall so sore that they deye by that fall that
is to saye that they fall in to grete sykenes & peryll of
soule that to our syght they deye in grete synne & er-
rours without ony amendement. Of suche men spe-
keth god almyghty & sayth. No man y putteth his
hande to the plowe & loketh behynde hym is dyspoled
ty come to the kyngdom of heuen. Here perauenture
thou woldest aske what is he that holdeth the plowe
& loketh behynde hym. He putteth his hande to the
plowe y amendeth his synes w^ocōtrycyon & cōfessyon
to brynge forth fruyte of penaūce & to encrease in ver-
tues. He loketh behynde hym that torneth agayne
to synne whiche were forsaken after tyme he had be-
gōne good werkes. Therfore what euer thou be that
hast begonne to leue byces torne not agayne to them
for a lytell dyssease yf thou wylte haue the grete mede
that longeth to perscueraūce. ¶ Also yf thou wylt be
perseueraunt thou must be stable in herte yf y wylt
be steble in herte y must beware of the lykkyng & pleas-
synge of the worlde & flee from wycked cōpany thou
must take no hede to prasynges ne to blamynges for
of all these cometh vnstablenes. And yf thou haue o-
ny lykkyng in ghoostly werkes that vnstablenes wyl
put it awaye / therfore be ware & flee suche maner of

occasyons yf thou wylt be stable. ¶ I saye not that þ
shalt flee bodely from þ worlde oꝛ fro wordely goodes
foꝛ they be pꝛyncypall occasyons / but I counseyll the
in herte and in wyll that thou flee all suche vanytees
foꝛ though þ be loꝛde oꝛ lady husbonde man oꝛ wyfe
thou mayst haue as stable an herte & wyll as some re
lygous that lytte in the cloystres But sothe it is that
the moost sykkest waye is to fle as relygous do but
foꝛ all may not be men oꝛ women of relygion / therfo
re of euery degre in þ worlde god hath chosen his ser
uautes. What euer than thou be þ wylt come to þ lo
ue of god begynne fyrst to do good dedes with a good
wyll and a contynuell desyre. After that desyre fulfyll
thy wyll in dede with dyscrecion that thou mayst con
tinue to thy lyues ende. Whan þ hast begonne thyn
ke in thyn hert that god hath gyue the suche grace to
begynne that thys ge to his worschyp thou mayst well
do it yf thou wylte perfoꝛme it in dede with the helpe
of god. After this poynte stande stably in wyll aske
grace of perseueraunce and perfoꝛme it in dede with
a feruent spyryte. And whan thou hast begonne dys
cretly though it be trauaylous in the begynnynge
all that trauayle be it in fastynges / wakynges / pray
ers oꝛ ony other ghoostly trauayle all shall be lyght
to the & shall toꝛne the in so grete myꝛthe and ghoost
ly confoꝛte that thou shalt sette lytell by the passynge
Joye and the vanytees of the worlde. Stande than
stably in wyll and in dede / and god almyghty that
hath begonne good werkes in the wyll noꝛyshe the
foꝛth in all vertues / defende the from thyn enemyes
teche the to loue hym / and kepe the in to his loue to
thy lyues ende after this deth thou shalt not drede foꝛ

thou shalt euer abyde in his kyngdome where that
is no care ne drede / but all Joye & cōforte for euer mo:
relastynge. Now I haue shewed to þe foure degrees
of loue & declared here hye specyall vertues whiche
as me thynketh moost nedeful euery man for to ha:
ue þe wyll trauaile in ghoostly werkes & to all other
maner men and women they be full spedfull to kno:
we whether they be relygyous or secular. And for as
moche as many in the begynnynge haue full lytell sa:
uour in deuote prayers or in holy medytacōns some
perauenture for tender age / & some for vnconnyng /
therfore to suche symple folke I wyll shewe a maner
for me how by medytacion they may be styred to deuo:
cyon and what maner prayer shall be to theym nedes
full.



AB By what prayer or thought thou mayst be
styred to deuocyon. ✠



Uhan thou ordeyned þe to praye or haue ony deu:
ocyon founde to haue a preuy place from all
maner noyse & tyme of reste wout ony lettynge. Syt
there or knele there as is moost to thyn ease. Than be
thou lord or lady thynke well thou hast a god þe ma:
de of nought whiche hath gyue to the thy ryght wyt:
tes ryght lymes & other worldely ease more than to
some other as þe mayst se aldaye þe lyue in grete dys:
ease & moche bodely myschye. Thynke also how synful
thou arte & were not the keppynge of þe good god thou
sholdest fall in all maner of synne by the owne wret:
chednes & than þe mayst thynke sothly as of thy self þe
there is none so synfull as þe arte. Also yf þe haue ony

bertue or grace of good lyuynge thynke it cometh of
goddes sendynge & nothyng of thy selfe. Thynke all
so how longe & how often god hath suffred the in syn-
ne / he wolde not take the in to dampnacyon whan þ
haddest deserued it / but goodly hath abyden the tyll
þ woldest leue synne & tozue to goodnes for loth hym
were to forsake þ he bought so dere w bytter paynes.
Also þ mayst thynke for he wolde not lese the he beca-
me man & was bozne of a mayde / in pouerte & trybu-
lacyons all his lyfe he lyued / & after for thy loue deth
he wolde suffre to saue the by his mercy. ¶ In suche
maner thou mayst thynke of his grete benefytes and
for the more grace to gete to the compūccyon beholde
with thy ghoostly eye his pyteous passyon.

¶ A shorte medytacyon of the passyon of our lord
Ihesu cryste. ✠

Thou mayste here ymagyne in thy herte as yf
þ sawe thy lord take of his enemyes w ma-
ny repleues & despytes brought before a Iuge false-
ly the accused of many wycked men and he answered
ryght noght but mekely suffred theyr wordes. They
wolde nedes haue hþ deed / but fyrst to suffre paynes
Beholde thā that good lord cheuerynge & quakyng
all his body naked bounde to a ppler about hym stan-
dynge wicked men wout ony reason sore scorpyng þ
blessyd body without out pyte. Se how they cesse not
from theyr angry strokes tyll they se hym stande in
his blood vp to his ancles from the toppe of his heed
to the sole of his foot hole skynne they leste none his
fleshe thy rased to the bones & for wepynges of them

Richard Rolle.

f.i.

selfe they lefte hym almost dede. Loke than a syde bp
on his blessyd moder / se what sorow she made for her
dere sone & haue compassyon of her payne that laye
th: re asworne. Come agayne to thy lord & se how
they vnbynde hym how hastily they drawe hym forth
to do hy more dysease. A garlode of thornes they put
vpon his heed tyll the blood ran downe in to his eyen
nose mouth & eeres. Than they kneled downe wth scor
nes & arose vp with repene & spette in his face. See
than how y^e blessyd lady beteth her brest draweth her
clothes & wyngeth her handes & I trowe thou wylt
wepe for y^e pytefull syght. Loke yet agayne to thy
lord & se how they hurle hym forth to an hyghe hylle
there to naye hym hande & foot vpon the rode tree.
Se than fyrst how fyerly they drawe of his clothes
& how mekely that he than wente to the crosse he spre
deth his armes abroad / but strayter wit cordes they
drew forth his armes tyll y^e synewes & the Joyntes
be all to broke & than with full grete naylles they nay
led his precyous handes to the crosse. In the same ma
ner thou mayst se how greuously they drawe his de
re worthy legges and nayled his feet downe to y^e tree
Se than how they profered hym for to drynke bytter
galle & eyfyll and kneled agayn before hym with ma
ny despytes. Than herken to that good lord how me
kely he taketh leue of his gracypus moder and of his
dere apostles & betaked them eyther to other as dere
moder and sone. Than with a grete voyce he comen
ded his spyryte to his father in heuen and hanged
downe that blessyd heed ryght forth vpon his breste.
Se also how soone after they perced his hert thrygh
with a spere with full grete anger and ranne downe

by his body medled blood & water Than mayst thou
haue full gretc pyte beholdynge that good lady how
for sorowe she synketh downe in her systers armes.
Take hede to the chere of his apostle saynt Johan to
the teres of marye Magdalene and of his other fren
des / & I trowe amonge all these thou shalt haue cō
puccōn & plente of teres. Whan there comethe suche
deuocyon thā is tyme that thou speke for thyn owne
nede & for all other quicke or deed that trusten to thy
prayer. Caste downe thy body to y^e grounde & lyfte vp
thy herte on hye with dzedefull chere than make thy
mone & yf thou wylt thou mayst thynke thus & saye.
A lord god almyghty blessyd mote thou be y^e madest
me thou boughtest me / thy suffraūce is full grete in
me / y^e woldest not take me in to dampnacyon that of
ten I haue deserued / but thou hast kepe & saued me
tyll I worlde forsake synne and torne hole to y^e. Now
lord with sorowfull herte I knowleche to thy godhe
de that falsely I haue spende and without proufyte
all my wyttes and vertues whiche y^e hast gyuen me
in helpynge of my soule all the tyme of my lyfe in dy
uerse vanytees all the lymmes of my body in synne &
superfluytees the grace of my crystendom in pryde &
other wretchydnesse. And sothly good lord I haue lo
ued other thynges moche more than the & not with
standynge my grete vnkyndenes euer thou hast nou
rished me and tenderly kepte me. Of thy grete suf
fraūce I had full lytell knowynge of thy grete ryght
wysnes I had but lytell dzed. I toke no hede to thā
ke y^e for thy grete goodnes / but all my lyfe fro daye to
daye grete mat of wrath I haue shewed to y^e thrygh
my owne wyckednes herfore lord I wote not what I

Richard Rol.

f.ii.

shall saye to þ but onely this worde in whiche I trust
God of thy grete mercy haue mercy on me / I wote
well lorde all þ I haue cometh onely of þ I wote well
without the no thyng may be / but my synne & wret
chyndes cometh all of me / wherfore lorde with meke
herte I beseeche thy grace do not me as I haue deser
ued but after thy grete mercy and sende me grace of
thyn holy ghoost to lyghten myn herte to cōforte my
sppyte to stable me in the ryghte waye to performe
thy cōmaūdementes that I may haue perseueraūce
in that I haue begōne & that I be nomore departed
from þ by my vnstabilenes or by temptacyōs of myn
enemye. It is lorde yet full worthy that I be chastys
sed for my wycked lyuynge w̄ what rodde thy wyll is
well come be thy sendynge. Pacyently good lorde sen
de me grace gladly to suffre thy chastysynge cōforte
me amōge for thy grete grace & whan thy wyll is w̄
drawe thy rod & take me to thy mercy. Full bytter be
these temptacyōs & full greuous to suffre & though
they be dredfull I wote well here after they shall be
mede full to my soule / but good lorde þ knowest well
myn herte is ryght feble moche is myn vnstabilenes
my cōnyng is but lytell therfore good lorde strength
me stable me & teche me as þ madest me & bought me
so kepe & defēde me body & soule I take to the no th̄
ge after my wyll but as þ wylt lorde so mote it be And
now good Ihesu goddes sone knowe of all thyng
helpe me in wycked thoughtes þ I dysplease the not
in lyuynge ne in assentynge full often I haue dysplea
sed the in dyuerse thoughtes al ayenst thy wyll & mo
che to my lykynge therfore it is thy ryght wysnes þ
I be trauapled w̄ other thoughtes at thyn ordynau

ce & greuous to me / but curteys Ihesu whā thy wyl
is put them awaye & take me in to thy grace. Ihesu
cryst goddes sone whiche stode styll before þ̄ Iuge no
thyng to hym answeringe wdraue my tongue tyll
I thynke what & how I shall speke þ̄ may be to thy
worshyp Ihesu goddes sone whose hondes were bou
de full soze for my loue gouerne & wysse myn hādes
& all myn other lymmes þ̄ all my werkes may begyn
& graciously ende to thy moost pleasure. Also lorde þ̄
seest well þ̄ many ther be þ̄ trust to my prayer for gra
ce that ye shewe to me more than I am worthy ye wor
te well lorde I am suche as they wene but thought
me prayer be vnworthy / take hede to theyr lownes &
to theyr deuocōn & what they desyre to your worshyp
graūte it them for your goodnes. Graūte them & me
& to all other for whom we be bounde to praye grace
to loue all that is to your lykynge and you to loue to
your moost pleasynge no thyng to desyre that sholde
dysplease you. All maner temptacyons myghtely to
withstande all other vanytees for your loue to despy
se you good lorde euer to haue in mynde and in your
seruice for to abyde to our lyues ende. And yf ye graū
te vs ony thyng to doo that shall be to vs medefull
graunte prate to the soules whiche be departed from
the body in þ̄ paynes of purgatorie abydyng your
mercy. Amen.



In suche maner thou mayst praye in the begyn
nyng & whan þ̄ art well entred in to deuocyon thou
shalte perauenture haue better selyng in prayers &
in holy medytacyons other wyse than I can saye or
shewe good broder or syster praye than for me whiche
by þ̄ techynge of almyghty god haue wyten to the

Richard Rolle.

f.iii.

these fewe wordes in helpynge of thy soule.

A Good curteys aungell ordeyned to my gouer-
nale I knowe well my feblenes & my vncons-
nynges/also well I wote þ strength haue I none to do
goddes seruyce but onely of his gyfte & of your besy-
kepþge. The connynges þ I haue cometh no thþge of
me but what god wyll seþe me by your good entysyn-
ge. Now good gracyous aungell I aske you lowely
mercy for lytell hede I haue taken of your good besy-
nes but now I thāke you as I can w full herte beses-
chyngge you þ ye kepe me truely this daye & euer mo-
re slepyngge you & wakyngge w syker defendþge & your
holy techþge. Defende me & kepe me from bodely her-
mes defende me & kepe me from ghoostly peryles to
gooddes worshyp & saupngge of my soule Teche me &
wyllhe me my wyttes for to dyspēde moost to goddes
worshyp & pleasynge. Feede me w deuocyon & sauour
of ghoostly swetnes conforþe me whan nede is ayenst
my ghoostly enemyes & suffre me not to lese þ grace þ
is graūted me/ but of your worthy offyce kepe me in
goddes seruyce to my lyues ende. And after þ passyn-
ge of the body presente my soule vnto the mercyfull
god. For though I fall aldaye by mþ owne freete you
I take in wytnes þ euer I hope in mercy Gladly wol-
de I worshyp þ & I myght to your lykynge therfore
god to worshyp for you/also you in hym after his ho-
ly techynge. I thanke hym w this holy prayer. Pas-
ter noster. Et ne nos. Sed libera nos a malo. Amen.

D E O G R A T I A S.

CEnprynted at London in Fleetestrete in the sygne
of the Sonne by me Wynkyn de Worde. .





WEXC



wenker worde.



